

OK, everyone knows this one. Sing along if you want to, just like in Hogwart you decide the melody.

I don't own Harry Potter, never really did.
J.K Rowling didn't share with me, not one bit.
So I thought I'll write some, just to fool around.
I say it again, that world isn't mine.
I'll write it anyway, I want my work look good.
That won't win with her owning it, nothing really could.

What is the meaning of life?

Some may think that that question is too complicated or too deep to answer and should be left for philosophers to talk and debate among themselves for all eternity, yet still not finding answer that would cover it all. Many simply don't wonder about that, having too many things on their heads and too little time to do them, but its always there. Simple, yet so difficult "why...".

Why do people go to work through most of their lives? Is it simply to earn money and pay the bills? Then why not find a way to have no bills or as little of them as you could? Maybe work is some way to state that you are independent and can take care of yourself. It is every teenagers dream to do as they please without their parents nagging them what to do. You simply move out, have a job to pay for your own place, and do as you please in the limited time in which you aren't working or too tired to do anything... But if you want to be independent, then why do you start your own family? To not feel alone? To have someone who will assure that your life's efforts were noticed in greater details? To have someone who will remember you after you die?

As I said you could spend countless years examining life, every aspect of it and how it works altogether and never come up with an answer, and that in itself is discouraging enough for most. But not everyone. And definitely not for Harry Potter, as he was doing it quite often, even if he didn't realise how far from "everyone" he was.

You may ask why a child only couple of years old would be asking so much of those kind of questions. Well, why so many is simple. Childish curiosity. Why those in particular? That, is different story.

Harry didn't possess much things in his life, and those that he had were so few, saying nothing about their market value, that they fit in his cupboard, while he was still inside. Most of them were clothes that he was given, and was constantly reminded that he should be grateful about that. Fact that they didn't fit him at all was beside the point.

He didn't had any friends either. If someone tried to befriend him, Dudley would take care of that "problem" for him. Parents wouldn't look at him long enough to have any other thought beside that they were glad their own children didn't cause so much trouble as he seemed to do wherever he was. Teachers on the other hand were divided between assuming that he would grow out of mischief, or that it was just that kind of character and you could do nothing about it. Possibility that he wasn't causing trouble but in truth he was trying to stay as far from them, or the troublemakers that were chasing after him, wasn't explored at all. Because you know how kids are, they are just playing.

Normally someone would explain certain things to you, or just calm you that you would know answers in due time, but that was another thing that Harry's life didn't seem to include, as only parental figures that he had at his disposal, his uncle and aunt, were the source of biggest confusion in his life. They were giving him chores not explaining how to do them, and then yelled at him that he did them all wrong. Only through time and errors he thought out how to please his relatives with his work. First thing he learned was to never complain, as it would make matters worse. Following was that you shouldn't be noticed, as it would mean that you did something wrong or Dudley was after you.

His pondering started with "What did I do?" every time he was locked in his cupboard, because yelling of his angry uncle consisted mostly of insults and sputtering, not really explaining what the whole affair was about. Harry's school work could place him at most average student. But his scores didn't take his limited time to study with his chores and time when he was locked in his cupboard into count. So in reality he was pretty smart kid if he wanted to be, but most of the time he would just act, as voicing your thoughts could get you in trouble, so why bother. But given hours alone in peace he noticed that in fact it wasn't one thing now and other earlier. It appeared that his relatives didn't like him for who he was, rather than what he did. And that got him started

He knew how not to stand out. And while nobody seemed to notice him more than they needed to, he observed them very closely. How anyone would behave, what they did or how responded in certain situations. He looked on things as small as preferences (clothes styles, or drink and food) to the big life goals. But as stated above, Harry's mind wasn't "shaped" by his favourite things because he got only hand-me-downs and leftovers, nor by opinions of his friends, as he had none. His mind was open to suggestions and so, he tried to get as much information about everyone as to know how to behave like "normal/acceptable" person. But as everyone is different, even if only a little, and being the right person wasn't only about behaving but also having right beliefs, it brought him to pondering about those kind of questions.

What is life all about?

If the question itself wasn't challenging enough, circumstances in which he was working helped to move the difficulty level up. Because what very small room with practically no light, little of food and drinks, and no way to get out of remind you off?

In prison solitary confinement is a punishment for a reason. If you had just one night when you couldn't sleep and kept thinking to the point where you thought you would go mad, then imagine when you can't tell if its day or night, and you have nothing more to do than think or exercise (which isn't appropriate with limited food). Because small, dark place full of doubts, where you can't control your own mind (here is the part where you put what your imagination might show you, then double or triple it as your brain have time to prove you underestimate it) isn't very nice place to be.

And so, like many times before, Harry was laying on his mattress, being locked in the cupboard for a weekend with practically no food for something he still didn't understand. And, like many times before, he spend his time thinking what got him here, what to look out for the next time, and the like. And, just like other times, after hours of trying to approach the problem from many perspectives, he still didn't have slightest idea.

'I just wish I had someone who would explain it all.'Harry thought to himself finally feeling his fatigue. Before his eyes closed on their own accord he spotted someone sitting at the end of his mattress,

hugging legs and chin on knees. 'Well, I am delusional now. Hope for being normal died today. Will have to note this date as "The End"' was Harry's last thought before sleep overtook him.

"It isn't the end, just a slight transition" said Harry's guest in a soft whisper watching the sleeping boy.

AN: Well just an idea, and now that it's in the open... I have no idea where it's going to end. Have some points to cover but nothing too solid. And this is unBetaed too.

I read somewhere that if you have to write author notes then you didn't write it correctly. Well, I disagree. I have to write here couple of things that for me are clear, but since I write this, some may not catch it.

Harry is couple of years old in this moment, 9-10 preferably. Clearly I don't know a thing about child's mental development but I tried to pick age where you still have curiosity and imagination of a small kid but start thinking rationally.

Yes, he tries to be part of the family. You can say that Dursley's are whatever you want to call them but Harry lived there as long as he remembers and just wants to be accepted. Since he still doesn't know about magic, he tries to reason how to act "normal". He can't ask, because they don't talk about the M word. And even if he wanted to watch how they act, then what? Dudley is a kid, still learning how to behave himself (leaving bully thing aside). Petunia is spying on neighbours, and he does the chores so he's learning how to be pedantic. And Vernon screams at him most of the time, which Harry is trying to change, but doesn't know what to do. Doing everything like them would probably be seen as mocking.

The whole thinking part is important. I don't want to make him a mastermind tactician so he has all things planned out from day one. But Harry will have more perspective, will see things from different angles. I like when there are multiple options.

And by the way. If I finally decide the starting point of some things, don't count it will be total cannon. I have read books so long ago, and picked lots of fanfiction till now, that I don't know for sure if some minor things are cannon or not. Main points are fine, small things that later are important, not so.

You don't want to hear it twice, trust me. I am not that good to sing that song again. Once was painful enough, but since it has to be said, maybe I'll try this.

A lawyer of J. K. Rowling walks up to me with a lawsuit regarding my story and says:

"I am Sprite, you are Thirst." And I know better than say otherwise.

It was quiet and peaceful evening on a normal looking street of Privet Drive in Little Whinging, Surrey. Well if a street that everything looks exactly the same is normal. And it would be a quiet and peaceful if not for inhabitants of house number four on said street, talking quite animatedly, raised voices included, with their guests about trauma their kids endured on today's trip to zoo. Reason for said trauma: escaped boa constrictor. And main point of this debate was who to blame for it. But, in spite of all the names adults in the living room would point the blame to, a boy locked in a cupboard knew that he wouldn't hear the end of it from his relatives. And he was using his situation to tell about it, in as many details that he could, to his own guest. At least, he was trying.

"Magie, why did you remove that glass?"

"Dudley wanted to see that snake up close, so i thought I could help" said girl resting in position that she would always assume in his cupboard. Sitting on the end of the mattress, while hugging her legs and with her chin on her knees.

"Then why put it back?" he knew he wouldn't get any straight answers while she stayed playful. He was proven right.

"Because if you borrow something, then you should put it back where it belong."she said it like it was some kind of old family motto, underlined with respect and not a small hint of its greatness. She tried to straight her posture to further the act, but it was hard as her back was pressed against the underside of the stairs. He could only smile at her antics.

"Come on Harry, I know that you enjoyed that one as much as I did."

"Well, as fun as it was, now I am locked in here and probably won't be out, except for bathroom brakes, for quite some time."

"You can be such a whiner some times Harry, you know that, right? And like it wasn't that we are by ourselves most of the time. We'll just have more time to talk, and I'll bring you food like I always do. It won't be so bad. But now get some sleep, it's getting late."

"Yes, mum" Harry smiled sweetly, which gained him mock glare from her. Sometimes he thought that her moods were contagious.

"If you will wake up in such a good mood, what would you say that along the food I'll bring someone to get the fun going? How about Odis and Desi?"

"No, you wouldn't."said horror struck boy "Anyone but those two. You might be playful but you do nothing compared to them. Even Nessie is better company."

"Good to see that I still have something to point out when you misbehave" she told him with a slight smirk. "Now sleep", and as she said that she reached out and scratched his head, which made him relaxed and calm. When he opened his eyes, she wasn't there, so he laid back and waited for sleep to take him.

At first it was hard for him to adjust to having an "imaginary friend" in a form of a girl looking approximately his age with straight light brown/dark blond (he wasn't really sure) hair and sky blue eyes. Never the less they talked and got to know each other, as even as she would appear to be creation of his imagination, she had history of her own. Magie would tell him stories about place where she stayed while she wasn't with him and people that lived there (like Nessie, Odis and Desi to name few). He would do the same but mostly speak of his thoughts about certain things.

Magie stopped being definition of imaginary friend when she started to interact with her surroundings, even if only he could see why certain things happened. Mirages don't do that right? Well, she could. First noticeable thing that she did, was to bring him real food, not the leftovers that Dursley's would let him eat, into his cupboard when his relatives had to go out of town and didn't get back as fast as they planned, which left him locked without couple of meals. From that point she would always aid him when he needed it, as with that escape from Dudley's gang that somehow ended on schools roof.

In time she would bring others so he wouldn't get bored or just someone who could help with a problem that he was contemplating. She would appear and go at her own leisure but even when he couldn't see her, Harry knew that she was still somewhere around.

Everything would be fine with that if not for everyone else that put the blame for things that happened, on him. Well, he couldn't complain much because, for one, complaining in this house wouldn't gain him much more than additional trouble, and secondly, telling that it was caused by an imaginary friend wasn't really an option. Besides, it wasn't like he wasn't blamed for everything before. He had to admit that now it was more bizarre than before, but at least he had someone to share it with.

And so, days following the zoo trip were spent on talking and goofing around in "their little world". Because even if Harry couldn't go wherever he wanted or do what he would like to, or because of it, he could go by living on little things, like small talk with someone or decent sandwich now and then. Especially if it was someone like her.

When finally he was let out, he was welcomed with a mile long list of chores and same level of acceptance from his relatives, which was minimal (if you could say it even was that high).

His mental preparations for long hard day were stopped by things that Magie did. To show how displeased she was by their behaviour she delivered a speech from the top of the kitchen table about the wrong doings that they were committing. No riot act read to anyone, not even the actual Riot Act could compare with what she was presenting. When she finished and noticed lack of response from the Dursley's she went on by acting like them even going so far as to mimic their voices, badly, while giving comments what complete imbeciles they were. Even thick headed person without patience to run out of like Vernon would be impressed by her, which is a lot considering she was at most eleven years old, but he simply didn't see her. The only person that could notice her was Harry, and at the moment he was doing everything possible as not to show how amused he was. The only thing that saved him from laughing out loud was his uncle sending him for the post.

But as he picked the letters his mind was cleared from all thoughts not concerning the one that was addressed to him. Dazed, he automatically went to kitchen and quickly found himself without his

letter and under barrage of questions which were ended when adults noticed what was written on the envelope. In his total confusion Harry saw Magie staring at the letter with pensive look on her face.

Next days were a blur of letters flooding the house like tidal waves, always bigger than the one before, mixed with mad uncle gaining momentum in his anger proportionally to amount of post coming into the house. Even when he was allowed to have the smallest bedroom, and later taken on a trip to nowhere, he couldn't comprehend what would make his uncle this worked up, but more than that, why his friend wouldn't speak to him about the letters.

And as he was laying on the cold floor, he wasn't expecting to hear "Happy birthday, Harry".

He looked up and saw Magie perched on the windowsill looking out into the stormy night.

"Is it today?"

"Its close to midnight so lets say that it already is. How could you forget about your birthday?"

"Had other things on my mind lately." he could see her smiling faintly.

"Go on, make a wish."

'I wish I could know what's troubling her.'

'You can.' was a reply in his thoughts, but before he could check if he imagined it, the door was blown open and biggest man Harry ever saw entered the room.

"Sorry about that, meant to knock."the man said looking straight at him, and then picked up the door like it was nothing and started to put them back in the door frame.

"Well, you did knock it down, I think that counts."

"Very funny Harry." was the reply from the giant that was trying to make the door stay in frame against wind trying to blow it inside.

Some may say that when a person in a size of a small hill destroy doorway it would be terrifying. Well yes, man that size would be capable to wrestle a bear or two, not saying what he could do to humans. But if said person then apologize and proceed to fix the damage, it is shocking at most.

But there has to be someone to be shocked. With thunderstorm outside, there was enough loud noise like waves crashing against the shore, wind blowing against the walls making them creak and thunders sounding throughout the air, that door slammed against the floor didn't make that much difference. With all the cracks and holes in the hut temperature inside wasn't that much different than outside. Without any heat sources, inside was only less damp and windy, which allowed you to keep your body heat better. So a small gust of air didn't do much more than make inhabitants of the hut bury themselves deeper under what they were covered with. All in all, the appearance of this hill sized man wasn't that much of a emergency.

Harry, who was the only one to notice the giant, wasn't concerned, as he thought that this was another one of Magie's friends, which would explain that this someone already knew his name. But after a quick glance at the windowsill and noticing that she wasn't there, that train of thinking was ended as she would always be with them. That made him confused. But as the man seemed friendly, there was no point to be afraid, except if he stopped to be so.

"Since you know my name, can I ask who are you and from where would you know me?"

Finally putting the door back on the hinges, the man turned and looked at him again.

"Ah, I forgot to introduce myself. Rubeus Hagrid, Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts, but call me Hagrid, everyone does. And I know you, because you look just like your father, except you got your mothers eyes."

"You knew my parents?"asked perplexed boy. With Dursleys questions were bad, but anything regarding his parents was particularly sensitive subject.

"Sure did, while they were at Hogwart and after. Which reminds me." Hagrid reached into his coat and handed him letter, which by now,

was too familiar to be mistaken."And." this time it was slightly squashed box."Might have sat on it at some point, but it'll taste all right. Happy birthday."

"Thank you."

"I'll make some tea, its terribly cold in here."

Hagrid went to fireplace, started fire and went to make tea and something to eat, nearly squashing Dudley while sitting on the couch. Startled by the manner in which he was awakened, boy went for cover to his parents room, screaming his head off along the way, which in turn made his parents running from their bed to look what was wrong. It just so happened that they collided in the doorway, making Vernon pull the trigger of the rifle he was holding and fire it into the much abused wall. Said wall had enough and went to rest on the floor, knocking the Dursleys out cold, providing them with several hours of sleep more than they would normally have, and ache for couple of days.

But Harry didn't pay attention to any of this, warmth from the fireplace, smell of food, or scene that his relatives were causing. His mind was focused on the letter, mainly what it meant.

'This is a joke, which is unlikely. Why would someone send letters and then Hagrid just to have fun out of someone as unimportant as me. Maybe someone is looking to have something out of this. But as I don't have anything meaning to offer... Then there are whiches and wizards. They might have bean since Merlin or earlier, but its safe to assume they are here long enough for some people to be capable of teaching, most likely hidden. Someone believe that I can do, or learn to do it too. But everything like that is Magie's thing. She does funny stuff.'

'Only if you want me to.'

Harry started to look around to see where his friend could be. First, he noticed collapsed wall with legs sticking out from underneath boards that it was composed of, which made him chuckle slightly.

'Cold.' she was playful again.

Then he looked to Hagrid, who was pouring water to a teapot from a copper kettle.

'Warmer.'

Having nowhere to look what of the little hut was in front of him, he turned and looked at the window that she was reclining by before Hagrid's entry. But instead of her he saw himself in the glass that with the stormy night behind of it acted like a mirror.

'Disco.'

Bewildered he stared at his reflection not knowing how to react.

'Oh, come on. Don't act like you didn't knew it was something like this. After all I started as an imaginary friend.'

'You're in my head.'

'If you want to say that I am part of you, then yes I am.'

'And you knew this all along?'

'No. Remember when you first saw me?'

'Thought you was hallucination from lack of food.' memory of him waking up after that night made him smile.

'Well, before that I felt, forgotten. Didn't really know where, or even what, I was, just that I was omitted. There wasn't that much beside a sort of calling from time to time. When I had an odd feeling, I, for lack of better word, thought I would end to be at all. But then I found myself in your cupboard. I didn't really know what was going on, but I felt connected with you. And despite of what you are thinking, I can't read your thoughts. Well, that didn't come out well, but what I meant was that in spite of the way we are talking, my connection to you told me what you needed or intended to do. Then I would simply do what I could to help, be it some food, getting you out of harms way, or lightening your mood when you felt like you could use it.'

'Well, then how do you know that you are a part of me?'

'First of all, I am only able to be myself, if you know what I mean, around you. And for most, that place I told you about that I am staying. When I get tired or you are busy with something I don't help you with, I go to where I was before, but since I know things now, I started to put them there because it would be difficult to live in nothing at all. I made my own house, forest, lake... well you heard all about place where I live. But in time others would come, and watching them and you I came to conclusion that you take "wandering thoughts" phrase too far. Well I might have something to do with it but you know the results.'

'So, everyone I've meet...'

'They are your thoughts. Well, that isn't exactly true. They are manifestation of your thinking categories, or something like that.'

'Thinking categories?'

'Well, stereotypes doesn't seem to be the right word. Each of them is a set of mind of their own. Lets start with our favourites. Twins started as anything that would seem odd, but as there was more and more of it, they became odds. They would always remind you that there was another way to do things. They are good at exploiting every chance and opportunity there is.'

'Well, Odis and Desi sure can come up with what you want to do, just not the way you would expect anyone to act.'

'They were the main reason I knew that I was somewhere that is close to you, as anything that you would trouble your mind with was main point of mischief they caused. Then there is Marvin, our pessimist, Merin with his delusions of grandour, Nessie, I don't have to tell you she's weird. I could count out for days, because there is quite a lot of them in here.'

'And that would make you my... magic?'

'It would seem so. But I don't know how to feel about it.' till this point she was in her storytelling mode, but that last thing was said with more restrain.

'Why?'

'From when I came, all you really wanted was to be "normal", what with those people you are living with. You accepted me as an friend and that was fine. But the more I suspected the more I didn't like the day that you wouldn't want me any more, because normal people don't see things... And when that letter came, I got a feeling, something familiar so I wasn't scared, but I knew that it would be important, and that got me worried. If you would learn something, it could end sooner that I would want it to.' the more she was telling, smaller her voice would be.

'Beside the point that you are a part of me and would stay even if I didn't want you to, why would I want to not see you? You are fun and playful when I need to relax, but right to the point when something needs to be done. We could spend all day and not get bored, even if its just talking. Well we did spend days like that. And your friends, though a eclectic bunch, is a plus too.'

'Maybe I do those things because you need me to be like that?' if he didn't know better he would think that she was embarrassed by what he said, but he felt that she was still worried.

'Well, considering that you spend all that time with my thoughts, or the likes, you really don't know how I think do you?' now she knew he was playful, which seemed to calm her more than anything he could say.

'Git.'was her reply, thou there was just a little too much of happiness when she voiced it to be an insult.

"Harry, you want something to eat? Sausages almost ready." came Hagrids voice from the couch.

'Well, lets go to learn something more about this new world.' Harry thought as he stepped away from the window and made his way to the offered food.

The rest of the time before they went to sleep was filled with Hagrid telling Harry's story and then, to lighten the mood, about Hogwart, what to expect on Diagon Alley where they would be shopping next day, and pretty much everything that came to his mind. All accompanied with sausages, tea and slightly squashed birthday cake.

AN. If you thought this will be Harry/OC pairing, it won't. Magie looks like that because I needed someone adorable, who you would want to be around, and it was easier for me to make adorable girl. Her appearance is what first came to my mind. She was what ever he couldn't be, like someone telling his relatives that he didn't like them from the top of kitchen table, or simply being playful and having friends. But when we get to, say Crucio in the atrium, I wouldn't want her to torture someone. I could, but I want his magic have multiple shapes, as to show different purposes that it serves.

If I surprised you with who Magie is, then good for me. Didn't really try to hide it. First I thought to give him simple friend, but that changed with the wording of Harry's wish. "I just wish I had someone who would explain it all.". Magic explains almost everything, just isn't someone, but that gets fixed rather easily. I have seen stories where Harry can communicate with The Magic. Magie is only his own magic, and just like him will have to learn what she can or can't accomplish.

That thinking part and seeing other angles of things is those friends of Magie. I am putting some of my characters, just for the fun of it. Like once someone said something like "People, I tell you weirdness must stop now." in the middle of chaos, and I replied "Oh yeah, she can be a bother sometimes" and that's how Nessie became a character. Its just so easy to make them. But back to the point.

No, Harry won't be dreamy and "in his own world" like Luna. It would be rather like when you look at situation and know how it could end, parents do that a lot scolding kids. Child wants to have fun and sees nothing more than that, adults know that something is more dangerous than it looks. But he won't have all the answers, just what he knows so far, like if wizards exist. And don't tell me you don't assume certain things like he did. If you disagree then when you see a man in a suit with a briefcase, of course he's anything but businessman, right? People make assumptions, its only way to stay sane.

I step into a bar after being announced by my guards as supreme being, ruler of all mankind, owner of Harry Potter, ...

Bartender: Is this some kind of a joke?

Unfortunately for me, it is.

Everyone have a routine of their own. What someone defines as routine behaviour differs from laying all day in from of TV to being dropped into the jungle with nothing more than a knife once or twice a month. What ever lifestyle you are living, to have that routine you always have to presume certain things. Because even with thought that you will take shower in the morning before work, you are taking for granted that there will be running water. Perhaps that's why people don't like sudden changes. When something that they weren't prepared for happens, and they still act according to their routine, almost everyone seem to panic to find that their responses don't work any more. Standing in a long line somewhere when you are in a hurry is enough for some people to be thrown out of balance, because all that delay wasn't expected.

But what would you do when being told that magic exist and every magic show you saw this far is only a small sample of its capabilities, and a bad try at it too. Modern lifestyle gets thrown with the garbage with thoughts of 'Oh well, we tried.' as its goodbye, while people go to illusionists for guidance. At least that's a happy alternative for panic on personal and riots on bigger scale.

Once again it needs to be reminded that Harry Potter wasn't "most people". He didn't go to sensory overload with thoughts of every possible change in his life. Spending time with Magie and her friends he had enough occasions to find that definition of "normal" wasn't fixed one, as things included into it varied with upbringing, beliefs, religion, sometimes situation... He simply wiped his mind from any assumptions more complicated than 'magic could make anything possible', and took a wait-and-see attitude, making mental notes of things like owl-post being common in wizardry world. And so, while he was following Hagrid, Harry spend his time observing the giant, listening what he said and asking questions from time to time.

Finally, they arrived at a pub known as Leaky Cauldron, and as Hagrid talked with bartender, Harry walked further, to watch people appear from seemingly empty fireplace, accompanied with bursts of green flames.

"You shouldn't be wandering around Harry, you might get lost." said Hagrid at last walking from the bar.

"Then I'll just look around, its somewhat hard to lose you out of sight, isn't it?" that made giant chuckle. "Is this how wizards travel?" boy asked, looking at the man which was dusting his robes.

"Among other things. But we better be off, we have lots of things to do."

At first Harry was amazed at the sight of a whole district hidden in the middle of London. But it was just for a short while. 'If there is government keeping it that way, it shouldn't be surprising', he thought to himself. The more he paid attention, the more he had to smile to himself that it all looked normal. It was more like visiting a country for the first time and having to adjust to new custom's than entering some fairytale and seeing mythical creatures lurking in every corner. Street filled with variety of stores and people doing shopping was what it was. And even if he didn't know what most of the things he saw could be used for, Harry could see similarities. Like boys watching brooms in a way their muggle counterparts would do with bicycles. Even scene with woman complaining about prices going up in the apothecary wasn't that strange. You just needed to connect the terms that people used to speak with, and this lifestyle didn't seem to be that much different. Even thou, Harry was certain that he would enjoy his new school and learning how everything worked.

Gringot was another such similarity, but this time it was in a form of bad parody of muggle thoughts about bureaucracy. Mean looking creatures forcing you to wait in endless lines, sending to different windows, giving hundreds of forms to fill. And if you eventually get to state your business they glare at you from behind their counters just waiting for you to do some stupid mistake. Harry didn't have much of personal experience, but heard enough complaining about having to do the same thing multiple times, always being told that it needed corrections, to know that it could be frustrating. But on the other hand, explaining simple procedure or regulation to different people, time and time again, all day long, can make you a little annoyed and unpleasant.

After endorsing that image for some time, Harry thought about what little he saw of goblins thus far with more reasonable approach, as he and Hagrid stood in line to one of the tellers.

'Hagrid keeps repeating not to mess with goblins, but if they are evil and mischievous like in stories then why would anyone entrust them with their money? Well maybe they are mischievous after all, what with poem as a warning. In normal bank there would be simple sign with "Bank under security" or something like that. About the poem, everyone would see it as a warning for thief's, since its a bank. But treasures aren't all in gold, so it simply says you shouldn't take what you don't deserve. Don't mess with goblins by demanding more than you have earned.' Harry mentally noted.

After the trip to the vaults he had first hand experience that when Hagrid told him about maze like tunnels hidden miles under the ground, enchantments and high security, it wasn't just a figure of speech, though he had to admit those carts were fun. Hagrid didn't think the same way, and had to take a short break, which left Harry to do his shopping by himself.

As his robes were fitted he thought that he would enjoy talking with someone his age and magical upbringing. After third sentence from the pale boy Harry changed his mind, because it was hard to have a conversation with someone who obviously liked to listen to his own voice. So he switched to autopilot listening in only enough to give short replies, which didn't bother monologue that was continuing in the slightest. In the meantime he watched professional tailors at work, never before being in clothes shop that fitted things on you. Never being in any clothes store really. He was concentrating on picking something that would help him make old Dudley's clothes more wearable until, "I say, look at that man." from the other boy reached his ears.

Noticing Hagrid near the front window, "What about him?" he asked, already knowing that the boy wasn't in the slightest interested in what he had to say, only looking for opportunity to express his own opinion.

"What would that savage want in this shop?" was the reply, as the boy looked around at the mostly empty shop, and at last sparing first glance in Harry's direction, who was the only other customer. "He is with you?" that question was accompanied with a strange look.

"Yes.", 'No point in storytelling at this point, especially that after ten minute long speech he doesn't like me all of a sudden.'

"What are you doing with that man?"

"Shopping." was quick reply, and Harry noticed the boy scowling, apparently at the manner in which his persona was treated. 'You don't always get what you want.' he thought.

He was spared from any further conversations, when Madam Malkin told him he was ready to go. Leaving the shop, he had wanted to remember everything seamstress did for future use, before he again began to observe everything in sight, as they went along with their shopping list.

At first Harry thought about spending all the money on everything close enough to reach, then running to Gringots for some more. But after stopping himself he admitted that it was stupid thing to do. Images of Dursley's, like Dudley and room full of toys that were abandoned after roughly week (fifteen days was current record), flashed through his head. This seemed to be family trait of some sort, as Vernon would order anything new and advertised to be in every home in the country. Was it to gloat as having that particular item as the only (or first) person in the neighbourhood, or just another indication at how normal it made them to have it too, wasn't the biggest similarity. It was the fact that later those things would make their way to the basement, garage and attic, some of them never opened. Most common reasons for this were that Dursley's couldn't assemble them and didn't want the embarrassment of asking for help from the company. With those that were mostly ready to use, they didn't know how to use them properly and his uncle would grumble about reliability, no longer wanting to send complaints about flaws that repairmen couldn't detect. Lastly, using appliances working on lower than half of their capacity, wasn't improvement, and tries for it would be abandoned for old way of doing things, as not to have change habits. So, before Harry was granted the smallest bedroom, it wasn't the only place in the house that dust could rest comfortably on not needed stuff.

Other thing was that not having anything in his entire life he was used to work with the minimal, or sometimes improvising with things

found nearby. All he needed to know was what and how he had to do his job, to think of doing it most efficiently with things he had.

All in all, buying loads of stuff he knew nothing about, magical at that, and taking them into his already small room wasn't wisest thing to do.

Not wanting to buy them, didn't prevent him from his observations. In the bookshop he spent time browsing through various tomes and reading single passages that caught his eye, sometimes answering question or two questions he had or simply letting him learn something interesting. Another one, was after noticing the unicorn horns, he did some feeble tries on calculating their rarity by comparing their price with that of beetle eyes.

His musings were stopped by new centre of interest, his new companion, a snowy owl, which was a birthday present from Hagrid, and for what he refused to hear any thanks. But anything else in the world vanished in the instance they entered a wand shop.

At first, Harry was spooked by the shop, and more so when its owner appeared. But, the feeling that Mr. Olivander knew something you didn't was gone when part with trying wands started.

Why would he measure his arm, or anything else, when there were no indications of consistency in length, wood type or material inside of the wand. Mr. Olivander said that you couldn't get the same results with somebody's wand, not that you couldn't do any magic. Then if he really knew how signs of wand choosing appropriate wizard looked like, then why wouldn't he simply lay all his wands out and tell him to pick them up one after another. He deliberately went back and forth bringing single box, rather than stacks of them in one go. Maybe that was how he remembered every wand sold. The relief that after all this time, there was wand for the customer. If not that, then all that walking must have hammered to his head where wands were missing from their places, and when they were sold. Not taking any respect from a man that had several generations of experience backing him up, but Harry was preparing for a long day, until he took a wand that gave him a warm feeling. Finally being allowed a proper swish, it appeared he had found his wand, if he understood the cheers from the two older gentlemen in his company.

After being spooked by Mr. Olivander for the last time, they went on their way with all the packages and had time for some more talk about Hogwart's before Harry's train arrived to take him back for the remaining of the summer.

AN. Now, as I am reading the first book while writing this, can someone tell me why Harry was able to go back to the Dursley's with all the books, cauldron, robes, Hedwig's cage, potion ingredients, telescope and anything I forgot to mention, and couldn't go the same way on the beginning of school year? How much heavier those things would be with trunk and couple of clothes, and even if, then he wouldn't have to balance as not to drop anything. I don't think Dursley's were so good as to come and help him carry everything, and until he got back home he did good on his own. Only problem would be cash for ticket, but that's a minor problem (or could be a major one, depends...). Someone prefer that Harry be on his own or Dursley's get involved?

If I would change country I live in, do some heavy surgery to change my gender and facial features, learn to act like J... we could be mistaken. But until then, I don't think anybody would mistake me with owner of Harry Potter.

'No chores. No shouting. Whole day outside of the house. Shopping...' Harry kept counting as he tried to summarise the day, on his ride back to the Dursleys. So far it was the best birthday he had. If he just took that comment one step further to, best day in general. Because just like in the phrase "calm before storm" there's always day before night, and it was evening already. But as he was distracted with everything he saw today, Harry didn't notice this, and didn't think much about what was awaiting him.

He didn't have keys (like they would give him one), so he had to knock and wait. Finally youngest Dursley opened, and grinned nastily when he spotted who was at the door.

"You're going to get it this time." Dudley said, letting him into the house. "Dad, freak is back." he called, after closing the door behind Harry, who was struggling with all his packages.

Vernon Dursley came from living room, his face purple from a day full of thinking of ways to teach his nephew a lesson. Whatever dressing down speech he had prepared, it didn't leave his mouth at the sight of all the things in the hallway.

"Boy, what's the meaning of this?"

"School supplies."

"What are you talking about? School supplies for what?"

"For Hogwarts"

That statement made Vernon stop, and Petunia gasp from the spot from which she was listening.

"YOU ARE NOT GOING THERE!" she shrieked.

"Why?"

"You will not be doing any of that freakishness. I saw it enough when my sister came back from that school and did all those unnatural things. Nothing like that will happen in this house." It was first time from what Harry remembered, that his aunt said anything with more than necessary feeling to it.

"Petunia told me about your parents and their kind. When we took you in, we agreed to make you normal. You will not be involved with any of that. You will get proper education, so you can live a proper life. If your parents would know better they wouldn't get themselves blown up and..." Vernon was building up steam again, but his ranting was interrupted, because Harry heard something that made him angry.

"ENOUGH!" he shouted, and all of the Dursleys found themselves unable to move. When he noticed this, he also noticed that Magie was absent from something as unusual as this. 'Interesting' went through his mind, but he had other things to worry about.

"You keep talking normal this, proper that. If you want me normal then why not treat me like Dudley? Something wrong with him? Beside that, look at yourself, look at what you do. Do normal adults beat children? What kind of people starve others? Does anyone gets locked away for just being different? The most normal thing you do is lie about all of this, everyone would. Maybe that's why you have fetish of being normal. If you still want to make me normal with what you do, then I tell you that some day you will injure me and it won't heal, or just starve me to death. If that happens then think hard how to rescue your illusions when people start asking questions of "How could that happen?" after my autopsy. Now. Move." At his last words they were released and adults staggered back into the living room as he stormed upstairs, not even noticing that his packages were floating after him. Dudley didn't move from the door for a long while, not understanding what happened and why it didn't go the way it was supposed to.

Only when Harry reached his room, he stopped and took a deep breath, his purchases dropping to the floor. Leaning on the desk, eyes closed, trying to calm himself, he felt arms encircling him in a gentle hug.

'You didn't do that before.'

'I can tell you needed one.'

'Haven't seen you all day, done something interesting?'

'You know that I am always around. Now stop it, and tell me what's wrong.'

Harry had to sigh. He wouldn't be able to fool her.

'All my life I thought why they treated me like they did. And now he tells me that was their way of showing that they cared. My upbringing was their way of parental "we know what's best for you" routine. They did everything as to make me acceptable to their standards, like their way of life was the only right one.' he told her letting some of his frustration out.

Magie hugged him tighter before letting go. When he opened his eyes she simply pointed to the bed. When Harry laid down, she sat on the floor beside his bed, scratching his hair in slow motions, humming slightly some tune he couldn't name right away. In no time he was asleep.

Last month of the vacations, Dursley's kept pretending that he was air. He didn't know if that was from what he said or what he did to them that evening, but that left him to care for himself. He was more than capable to do that. Not doing chores left him with plenty of time to read his new books, talk with Magie and her friends on a whole new level, and getting to know with his owl, Hedwig as he named her.

But the closer it was to September, the more he thought about how to get to his school. He couldn't count that his relatives would suddenly acknowledge his existence again, and simply help him. So he written letter to Hagrid asking how to get to the platform (after he checked the ticked in early stage of packing), and to change some galleons to pounds, just in case he wanted to buy something to something he knew, while waiting for the train. Wouldn't be good to say that something was wrong and cause distress to his already troubled family in the process. Hedwig was just too happy to make her first delivery. While waiting for her return he checked buses and trains for Kings Cross.

When at the last day of August nothing seemed to change, he went to bed preparing to travel by himself. He awoke early next morning, and after checking if he had everything in his trunk, that he acquired from the attic, he went down to start his trip to the school. But when he came into the hallway his uncle came from the kitchen with his coffee cup in hand.

"What are you doing here at this hour?" he demanded.

"It's first of September, I have to go to school."

"And where are you going?"

"Kings Cross."

His uncle regarded him for a while. He finally seemed to come to a decision.

"Wait couple of minutes and I'll give you a lift."

It was Harry's turn to think, but in the end he nodded and dragged his trunk to the door.

Ride was spent in silence, with Vernon glancing at his nephew from time to time. Harry just looked out of the window, trying not to think too hard at what made his uncle do this. When they arrived at the station, they loaded his trunk on a cart together. Inside of the building Vernon seemed to try tell something, but he just got red in the face, and in the end said only "Have a good term." before turning and going back to the car.

Harry looked at his retreating relative, then just shrugged and went to the entrance of platform nine and three quarters. He had close to twenty minutes to spare but went straight through to his platform, in part to check if it was really there. There wasn't that much of a crowd as in muggle section, but you could spot small groups here and there. He went along the train, as the steam engine locomotive was nearest to the entrance, and found whole cart on the end, as except to couple along the way. He could use couple hours of sleep more, so he went for the compartment in which he would avoid disturbance.

At first he tried to lift his trunk off the ground, but then he simply put in on one step and then on the train, pushing it up. He dragged his

things to the last compartment, and since he couldn't heft the trunk on the shelf over his head, he pushed it under the seat, and noticed his companion for the ride. There was a toad in the corner croaking silently. He smiled at the idea that it was hiding from the conductor because it didn't have a ticket.

Harry made himself comfortable, but it was close to departure and crowds absent from earlier just appeared. With all that noise from outside and sounds of trunks and doors slamming throughout the cart as it filled out, he went for a book in place of sleep.

When the train started moving he thought that there wasn't so much people after all, but went back to his lecture fast enough. When the cart came he bought at least one of every kind of candy as to try it out, though he tried hard to not overdo it. So he was some way through the journey, his book and stack of sweets, unpacking his last chocolate frog (Dumbledore card again), when the door to his compartment opened and a girl with lots of bushy brown hair and a boy near tears after her peered inside.

"Have you seen a toad? Neville lost his." she said in a bossy tone.

He smiled and pointed the corner where he spotted object of their search. At that Neville, as he guessed, dived right under the bench. The girl was thrown on the seat next to Harry in the process at which he chuckled slightly, gaining him a slight glare from her. But he just smiled at her and went back to his book.

"What are you reading?" she asked.

"A History of Magic."

"You like reading?"

"Well, I certainly don't dislike it. I did it often in school, my cousin wouldn't go anywhere near library. But now I thought some reading may be good to pass the time, and I need some catching up on magical world."

"So you are muggle raised too?" he just nodded. "But why were you hiding from your cousin?"

"Well, he and his gang liked to play Harry-hunting, and since I am Harry... you know."

"Oh." she looked at him sympathetically for a moment, before "OH. Sorry, I haven't introduced myself. Hermione Granger." she extended her hand which he shook.

"Harry Potter." at that the boy looking for his toad hit his head with bench, and at last came to his feet with toad in his hand.

"Are you really?" said Hermione. "I know all about you, I got a few extra books for background reading. You are in Modern Magical History and The Rise and Fall of Dark Arts and Great Wizarding Events..." she had to stop because Harry began to chuckle again.

"Why are you laughing?" she said with a frown.

"Well I just wanted to ask about me, since it seems that you know me better than I do myself." that made her scowl. "Sorry just kidding." he raised his hands in placating manner, and smiled at her which made her look away. "Does it say about anything more than the night when my parents were killed?"

"Well, nothing solid." she said with downcast eyes and slightly red ears.

"But you said you are muggle raised..." said boy with the toad.

"I am. You are Neville, right?" he nodded. "I lived with my uncle and aunt. Only learned about magic when Hagrid came to give me my letter. Its funny story too..."

Rest of the journey was spent on knowing each other. Reluctantly at first, but then they talked about their childhood. Harry not knowing anything about magic and living with his relatives, having to wear hand me downs and do chores. He left Magie out of it, didn't like sharing that secret with anybody. Hermione told them about her thirst for knowledge, and striving to be best, which left her with no friends. But they were overwhelmed with Neville, two of them not knowing wizards point of view, and Neville himself by the fact that someone actually listened what he said, not criticizing him like his family used too. Well, maybe they didn't outright say it and complain,

but others could read between the lines and from the way person talking voiced their thoughts.

They ended their conversation as the voice echoed throughout the train signalling that they were close, and Harry had to hastily change into his robes, as the other two already had theirs on. They left the train, and heard booming voice and saw a lamp in the distance. As they went that way, Harry introduced Hermione and Neville to Hagrid, and they walked further, till they came to the boats, and with their help across the lake, and finally to gates of Hogwarts. Gazing in awe at the castle, every second they could.

AN. My answer for "How Dursleys got off the island, if Hagrid took their boat?". You don't leave boats anywhere, there must have been dock or somewhere that person Vernon rented boat from kept it. Harry told the man at the dock that Dursleys were still there.

This fic is mostly my adapting to something more than one shots, so I am writing things to the original. That's why chapters are short, as I am writing one for one in book, and just adding couple sentences to the whole. I hope it will change when fic will go its own way fully. But in this chapter there was a lot quotes from the book, but then I changed way I wanted to go, deleted, added and so on, and I don't know exactly what stayed the same. So I'll just say that there are quotes from "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" that will be marked as soon as I re-read this along with the book. (probably when working on next chapter).

The whole thing with Trevor being in Harry's compartment. If he was early I could make him sit with anybody, but I just wanted to make Hermione meet him without Ron around, and there is never better time than the present. It does leave me with problem of Ron not being in "Golden Trio"... but as I am just poking stuff from their place, I'll wait and see what comes out of it.

Why would J. K. Rowling write fanfiction when its her world and she can simply publish her work and make loads of money for it? Seriously, its an honest question. Since I am not her, I don't have slightest idea why she would post her stories here. Someone can give me a hint?

It was close to midnight after start-of-term feast at Hogwarts, but even at a day like this Harry wasn't worn out from excitement. From young age he learned to enjoy peaceful silence of night. There are some better ways to learn to appreciate it, but for him it was simply because day was filled with activity and shouts. He liked when everyone was asleep in the neighbourhood, because he felt calm being in the middle of motionless world.

'And what keeps you awake this time?'

He opened his eyes and look at the headboard of his four poster bed, where Magie perched herself this time, and had to smile.

'Thinking if you are part cat or not.'

'Why would I be part cat?' she asked with raised eyebrow.

'For one, you like sitting like you are now, though windowsill is your favourite place. Ever since I moved from my cupboard you sit anywhere but bed or chair.'

'You should try it yourself, its fun.' was her reply.

'Then there is your thing with scratching, you do it a lot. Well, normally I should scratch you, since you're the cat, but i think that you scratch me instead to get me off track.' that made her chuckle. 'And most important thing, you walk your own ways. I haven't seen you couple of days now.'

'Well, you know that I don't need to be always here to be always here...'

'Ok, ok. Enough with that smug look of yours.' he enjoyed their banters, but even more when she didn't tease him as much as he did her.

'So, something happened while I wasn't around?'

'Nothing big. First time at enchanted castle with ghost's and gigantic feast. Magic and stuff. You know, day like any other.' Harry said as indifferently as he could.

'Well, even day as boring as this one would surely have something worth mentioning.' She said, playing along.

He closed his eyes, and smiled at memory of what occurred not so long ago...

Harry walked toward the stool noticing people straining their necks to look at him, but it was soon replaced by sight of inside of a hat.

'Well, I haven't seen mind like yours before.' Harry heard small voice in his ear.

'I can say the same.' he thought, laughing internally at the paradox that he was looking inside head of someone who was doing the same to his.

'Witty, with keen mind. You keep your friends in mind, but considering who they are that isn't much of a surprise. You are ambitious, want to reach far, and brave enough to go there. Difficult. What to do with you...'

'Well, do your worst.'

The voice was silent for a while after which, 'Now why would you say something like that?'

'Couple of reasons but nothing in particular. If you would be my enemy, then after your worst it will only get better for me. You probably know what they say about friends in need, so might come something good from it. Reasons like that. But mostly, life isn't getting any easier. Its better to learn to face it sooner than later.'

'Well, if you put it this way, then you will be a true "GRYFFINDOR"

... hat shouted and I went to my house table. Then it was talking and eating till everyone nearly burst. Hogwarts school song is... different, might tell our friends about it.' Harry finished with a yawn.

'Any other story you want to share?'

'Maybe later.' he said getting comfortable for the night, as he glanced at her, 'No pouting, if you come more often, well get more time to talk.' At that she just smiled and vanished as he closed his eyes for good night sleep.

Sorry for this chapter not being much but in book sorting is just a way to introduce Hogwarts and everything, loads of descriptions. Since I got a little problem further, I just changed why Harry was Gryffindor, as I got him Malfoy-less train ride. To make this post just a little better:

Omake

(Underlined text is from Harry Potter and Philosopher's Stone by J. K. Rowling)

"Welcome,"he said."Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak! Thank you!"

As people clapped, freshly sorted students, and even some older ones, didn't know what to make out of that short speech, but Harry couldn't help but laugh.

"What are you laughing about?" Hermione said from his side.

"Well... When I was in school, teachers always told us that you should tell it in your own words. Since I didn't know answer for some question at the end of the year, so I answered "Klaptin strank vlek mip wrotst..."

People around stared at him with confused expressions but Weasley twins which heard him were howling with laughter. Hermione tried to scold him "Harry, you shouldn't do that. No doubt you got in trouble for it."

"Nah, he let me pass for creativity when I explained what that was about..." he replied and Twins hit the floor they were laughing so hard.

("In your own words" comes from George Carlin. His sketch came to mind when I read quoted part. Its sad there won't be any new jokes of his.)

Why people won't stop harassing me with questions if I am J. K. Rowling every time I post... She's gone missing and everyone is looking for her? Is that it? If so, then its good I am not her. I like knowing where I am.

Magic, with its difficult wand movements, exact amounts of potions ingredients, and complicated equations in arithmancy, isn't precise. Or saying it differently, there is so much things to be precise about that it is borderline with chaos. Student could trace imperfect pattern with his wand, but spell would work do to his will and magic compensating for the imperfections. Spell effect would be weaker, or you would need more magic to cast it, but it would work. Same with potions, you could add slice too much or too little, and potion would still work. It would work slice of time shorter or longer, or change you slightly less, but it would still work. Imperfections could be corrected to certain degree, but it was on personal scale.

In Hogwarts, magic would occur in variable amounts throughout the castle, and it had to compensate for it. Whole building couldn't shift with waves of magic pouring through its halls. But its parts could intercept those changes and negate them, and no harm would be done to magical school as a whole, with its secret rooms and unknown magic working within them. But, as said before, to compensate for vast amounts of random occurrences, you get seemingly chaotic process. If someone would just check, one example would be the staircase leading "somewhere else" on Friday. It could easily be connected with fifth years up and those below, having lessons in parts of castle across that staircase, and it was responsible for easier connection as magic balanced between those two groups.

But almost everyone simply thought that it was normal, like moving pictures, ant stopped at that. And as always Harry Potter wasn't one of them. He had habit of observing everything around him, and even without much of magical knowledge he could tell that building as a whole didn't move. So instead of learning where each room was, he concentrated on pinpointing parts of the castle, and then what was within them. Because even if room wasn't where it should be, it wouldn't appear in different part of the castle. Door to it would probably be somewhere on the wall of the parallel corridor.

As for classes, they weren't as hard as Harry thought they may be. They were different, that was certain. But as it was school, they started with small things and scribbling notes most of the time, and all in all he was doing good. In fact, one of the reasons that Harry was doing good, were Dursley's.

As we all know, they didn't encourage him to study, in fact they didn't approve, to say lightly, when he did better than Dudley. And that was why he had to study harder. Its confusing but to do worse, he had to know more. Because when you got lower than Dudley, teachers would start giving you pointers or simply read more from your vague answers, just not to fail you. And he had to know more to prevent that, to get lower score, but still pass in some way.

But study wasn't his worst problem. Hagrid told him that he was famous and everyone knew his name. Obviously all they knew was his name, since everyone wanted to see him. But really, what legendary Boy-Who-Lived, who defeated Dark Lord by some mysterious force when he was a baby, had to do with scrawny little kid who didn't know anything about magic. Well except that they had the same name. Simply for that fact Harry thought that wizards were blinded by fame as much as Muggle's did, and they couldn't see the truth of someone, instead leaning for their imagination and creating vision of greatness. And as such, Harry went for not caring much about them.

It was good that he had Neville na Hermione to talk to, as they treated him as a normal person since their shared train ride. Others would act strangely around him. Mostly people were simply gawking, but some would come up and act like they were long time friends. Example of the later was the same pale boy from robe shop, trying to act like those betters should stick together. Harry told him that earlier he didn't consider him as someone worth to be remembered. At Malfoy's, as the boy was named, confused "What earlier?", "Exactly what I was saying." was Harry's reply. But all that changed with his first potions class.

As soon as Harry stepped into the dungeon where potions class was held, it was obvious that Snape marked him as his target. After barrage of questions, some of which Harry thought that wasn't even in their first year curriculum, Potions Master docked points from him for not knowing answers, and cheating at those that he was able to

answer. Then throughout the class he would take points for whatever Harry did, even for accident that got Neville hurt.

Many Slytherin's snickered, and Gryffindor's winced at the treatment. But Harry, he just sat there and went with anything that Snape said with smile on his face, saying that Professor had perfect judgement of situation, and in every instance was right. That left class dumbfounded, and Snape angrier than ever, which made him take more points.

Since Snape was Head of Slytherin House, everyone non Slytherin got caught in the treatment that followed from that moment, but Gryffindor's complained the most. After that class, whispers changed to ones accusing Harry for all wrong in the world. It was another thing that made him sure that magical community acted much like muggles when it came to famous people. First they were famous but soon after, some scandals would surface, putting celebrities in bad light. There is nothing that people like more than throwing down idols. It is good to have someone you look up to, but people don't like to be inferior. So, someone don't get to spend too much time on the pedestal.

Some of the tension in the air was lifted by the announcement of flying lessons. They were always before Quidditch trials, and that meant that season was soon to open. Since visit to Hagrids hut the day of the first potions class, Harry was spending much time alone, not wanting to endanger Neville and Hermione to the same treatment he was receiving from the school. Though for only a while, was his comment, which made them confused. But at half to four, he went with everyone onto the grounds for their first flying lessons.

Lesson started fairly well, until Neville went into the air. At this point three things happened. Madam Hooch's started yelling at Neville to come back, and that was it. God B. Damned thought 'If you consider this a lesson and not a plot point, Hooch couldn't rescue one student from falling from his broom, and she gave "OK to lift off" to twenty of them. Nice going Hooch... Is this thing on?... Damn'. And lastly Harry concentrated on Neville...

"STOP!" he shouted and Neville's broom stopped in mid air, some fifteen feet from the ground.

"DOWN!" Harry yelled again, but this time broom didn't react. He frowned, thinking quickly what to do next, not noticing shocked people around. Even Madam Hooch didn't move since Neville left the ground.

Harry at last glanced around at inaction of everybody around him, so making his decision, he grabbed his broom and lifted from the ground. At first he was somewhat hesitant, but soon gained control of the broom. He flew near Neville, but far enough as to not startle the boy that paled substantially since his last contact with earth, and was clutching his broom tightly.

"Hi, Neville."

"H-Harry?" Asked terrified boy, not daring to open his eyes, which he closed some time ago.

"Yeah. I am going to bring you down, so relax. If it will be better for you, you can grab on to my shoulder when I lead you to the ground." he told him slowly, grasping his broom. Neville only nodded.

Harry had some problems with controlling two brooms at once, but he managed to drag Neville after him, and land.

"You two, take him to hospital wing for some Calming Draught." commanded more composed Madam Hooch, assigning Hermione and Paravati to take care of Neville. "Class dismissed. You stay." This time she looked at Harry.

"Explain yourself." demanded Madam Hooch when everyone else left.

Harry was somewhat startled by that, since why should he explain himself from rescuing his classmate. But he thought better than voicing his thoughts and went with describing what he did instead.

"Well, since I didn't know about flying brooms earlier, I read some books in the library to learn more. From what I know there are enchantments on it to let the broom know who is steering when more than one person is riding it. Since broom was lifting, doing last thing it was told to do, I just thought that broom might feel like there was no one that was steering, since Neville didn't do it. At the start of the lesson I felt like the Up command was more to tell broom

who will be riding it than anything else, so I told the one in the air to stop. Since it wouldn't come down, I had to go get it. I think that until I grabbed it, the charms again were confused that someone was riding the broom but wasn't steering it"

Madam Hooch just nodded before letting him go.

As he entered the school...

"Well you think you are so great now, don't you?" came from Malfoy, if Harry remembered correctly. Like always he was flanked by his goons.

"Why would I think that?" Harry asked confused.

"You all Gryffindor's do flashy stunts and consider yourself great for doing dumb things." Malfoy said in drawling voice.

"Well, helping a classmate isn't that dumb if you ask me, and as for the flashy part..." Harry looked himself over for any amount of sparkling. "Can't see anything flashy, care to show me what you are talking about?"

"Don't mock me, I am twice the man you are!" said pale boy, somewhat losing his cool.

"Well... Truthfully, they might be twice as me" came from Harry who gestured to Draco's goons whose names he still couldn't remember. "But you... I wouldn't say that. Mind turning? Maybe if I see your profile..." he was trying to peer at the Slytherins from the side, which made Malfoy's face to turn slightly pink, and his thugs share a confused look.

"That's enough, I challenge you to the wizarding duel..."

"Now, why would you do that?" Harry asked, clearly interested in the answer.

"Wha-What?" was Slytherins answer, which clearly stated that he didn't predict this turn of events.

"I thought formal duels should be called only when you wanted to end a dispute or defend your honour. So, I asked what is your

reason for the challenge. I wouldn't like to go around the school in the dark when someone might catch me..." at this Malfoy stiffened, Harry noticed."... have a duel in some excluded place where no one could see. And since I don't know that much about magic, when I would accidentally blow us up, there wouldn't be anyone to help. And all that over some misunderstanding... So, you were saying?"

Malfoy gritted his teeth for a moment, before huffing and storming away. Harry just shrugged and went his own way.

Next day was Friday again, and tension went up with another potions class. Snape didn't cool down from past week and his second encounter with Harry left him more hateful than he was ever before. Harry was still acting like potions classroom was best place to be, and Potions Master was best Professor ever. Snape wouldn't have any of that, and it only made him try harder to wipe that pleasant smile from Potters face...

After class, Harry didn't have to stand the whispering that again started spreading with full force, because he was intercepted by some unknown Gryffindor student.

"Harry Potter, you are to go to the Quidditch pitch."

He didn't ask much, and was just too happy to get away from the mob before someone started handing out the pitchforks. But when he got to the pitch he stopped. There was group of people there, all in uniforms and brooms in hand. And then he remembered Dumbledore saying that the try-outs would be held in the second week of the term, and this was the last day. But why was he here?

"Potter, get changed and grab a broom. We'll be starting shortly." yelled a burly boy

When Harry got back, the trials started. Since there was only seeker spot open, it was main event. When it would be done, Oliver Wood, as was the name of the burly boy, who was captain of the team, would consider doing some more tests for reserve players, if there was someone good enough in the group. But for now, everyone had to get through his torture machi... correction, selection program. It consisted of everything from timed obstacle course, for which they would all ride on one broom as to get person with best skills, through

catching golf balls under bludger onslaught, to improvised game, when everyone would just fly around in random patterns and only one person was allowed to catch the snitch, disturbance among people competing for the spot would be treated as something other team would do.

At first Harry had slight problems, as it was his second time on broom, but soon he found that flying was natural to him, even with broom that wasn't in best shape. In the end, he passed with flying colours and got the position.

Time passed, and was filled with classes and Quidditch. But the more of it went, more tension would come, due to the Potions Master that was setting new records in his biased behaviour, and a black haired boy with green eyes, that everyone blamed for it. After nearly two months, people started breaking up. And it was day before Halloween.

At dinner that day, Harry, who was sitting at one end of the table away from everyone else, was approached by couple of annoyed older students.

"Potter, you will stop it." said the biggest of them all.

"Hmm, yeah you are right. It wouldn't do to eat too much before bed, I could get nightmares." Harry said, putting away his fork.

"I meant that yo will stop annoying Snape." Said the same boy through gritted teeth.

Before Harry could reply, Professor McGonagall came from head table.

"What seems to be the problem?" she said, looking at the older boys with stern look.

"Its Potter's fault, Professor." said another boy from the group, pointing to the hourglasses measuring house points.

In fact, three Heads of Houses thought long about why Slytherin had twice as much points as any other House, and Gryffindor points were nearly always at zero.

"What did I do?" asked Harry, bringing McGonagall from her thoughts.

"You are making Snape angry, and he brings it out on everyone else." was main meaning of the shouts from the group of older students.

Harry just raised his hand, waiting to be acknowledged to take a voice.

"You yell about effects, but I would like to know what I did in the first place." Harry asked when shouts died down.

People in the group had to stop at that, because they simply didn't know. Everyone looked at first year Gryffindors that could tell what happened in the class. First years for their part, ducked their heads not wanting to find themselves drawn in the conflict. But after some probing they told everyone how the class looked, and no matter if Harry answered questions, if he would stay quiet, or even apologise, Snape would dock points from him, for cheating, not participating or helping others throughout the class, or speaking out of turn respectively. After that Professor McGonagall had new target for her stern look.

In the chaos that erupted from that moment, Hermione came to sit near Harry, closely followed by Neville. Even if they didn't spend much time together, they were closest to each other than any of the other first years, not saying anything about older students.

"So, this was what you was waiting for?" Hermione asked quietly watching the buzzing hall.

Harry had to sigh. "Everyone tells that Snape hates non Slytherins, yet no one does anything. Since he hates me most, I could do many things but there were three most probable. I could go about my years at Hogwart like everyone and spend it letting Snape harass me. I could do everything in my power for him to stop it, either by showing that I am not a push around or that he don't have reasons to hate me. But both of those are long term and I would have to make an effort in second direction. Last one, I could sit, act normally and wait. And that I did."

"What?" asked perplexed Hermione.

"You know, in physics if you have force working on large area, and gather it in one point, that force makes more damage, to say simply. So, Snape could dock couple of points per class and nobody would notice. In fact, he did that for years from what seventh years told. But if he takes couple of times that, there is mayor difference."

"So you provoked him?" asked stunned girl.

"What are you talking about?" Harry was clearly confused. "I was answering questions and being polite to my teacher. I don't understand what's this all about." he said pointing to the Head Table and teachers shouting at Dumbledore, who was trying somehow bring things to order.

He really didn't do anything. Now that she thought about it, he wasn't acting any different from other classes. Everyone else, covering in their seats, were different. That's why he was standing out. Snape, on the other hand, was docking points no matter what anybody did, and since Harry wasn't acting like Potions Master was used to, it got worse. Large loss of points brings attention, and when they would investigate what's wrong. And student that was punished the most wouldn't be different. Teacher's perspective would be. And as soon as they see it, it won't be about Harry. It will be all about Snape.

That last thought brought smile to the three when they went to sleep, leaving Great Hall in mayhem, and unbeknown to anybody, a pair of red-headed twins smiling with tears in their eyes at seeing a prank of this proportion.

AN. Even if this chapter is longer, still sorry for skipping some parts, like trials or potions class. I will have to improve this story, but for now I just do the main stream.

Moment when fic goes its own way came sooner than later, since I killed plot with sidestepping the duel. Well, damn. What to do now...

Omake

As Malfoy was circling over everyone with Neville's rememberall in hand, taunting Harry to come after him, Harry just stared at him. Then he smirked slightly and yelled "Stop!" and Malfoy's broom did

just that, nearly making Draco fall from the sudden stop. Whatever the Slytherin tried to do, the broom hovered there, unmoving.

"POTTER! You better..." but he didn't finish it as Madam Hooch returned and started shouting at him to "Come down this instant!" which Malfoy couldn't do, and which multiplied his troubles by the second. Finally Harry told the broom to come down...

(well it looked something like this in the first draft, Malfoy would get in trouble, his father would make it better, and they would still have the midnight duel. In this case Harry would have more will for Malfoy to stay up there, so the broom would listen to him. But then I thought that Neville shouldn't have to get in all those accidentals... Then I had problem how to put Harry on the team without the rememberall catching. But in the book there isn't anything saying that first years couldn't be on the team, they just didn't make it. They couldn't have their own brooms, but it isn't the same thing. So lets just say that Hooch heard from him enough to sign him on the try-out list.)

I don't own Harry Potter. I would feel weird if I were to own a person. Even if he is fictional.

As for a magical school, first years weren't doing much magic. Well, if you think about it, fact that you have your hands and legs since birth, don't mean you can walk and write that long. So even if you have magic your entire life, it doesn't mean you know how to use it. And if you make mistake, you wouldn't just fall, but you could blow everything up, or end up with buffalo on your chest. That's why every spell students did, was preceded with some time of theory and practice before any attempt of actual casting. That's why, for first years, Halloween this year had that little bit magic more in it... even if it was celebrated in magical castle with ghosts, real bats, and everything else.

"Wingardium Leviosa!" Harry said, doing well practised pattern with his wand, but his feather didn't move.

'Do that again.'

He looked around, and finally noticed Magie standing on the back of his chair, looking over his head.

'You really don't do normal, do you?' Harry asked jokingly.

'Just do that again.' was her only reply, which startled him. From what he remembered, this was probably first time when he saw her being this serious.

Confused, Harry did the patterns and said words again, and quickly glanced at Magie. She was staring at her hands while flexing her fingers.

'What is it?' he asked at her thoughtful expression.

'They're tingling.' she answered, then looked at him, his wand, and lastly at the feather in from of him.

Smiling, she vanished, and when Harry turned, she was in front of him blowing at the feather making it hover couple of feet in the air.

"Oh, well done you two!" cried Proffesor Flitwick. Only then Harry noticed that one other feather was in the air, and that it was

Hermione's. Rest of the class was sulking, and many were muttering that it was impossible. He looked back at Magie, and she just winked and vanished, leaving him puzzled over the feather that floated back to the desk.

He was brought back from his thoughts by the sound of people gathering their things and leaving, which confused him, because while musing he missed the bell that ended the class, and as he was looking around to see what was going on, he noticed Hermione fleeing the classroom with tears running down her face. He quickly gathered his things and followed.

As he entered the bathroom, he wondered why girls would most preferably go there in situations like this. Hearing sobs that were coming from cubicle furthest from the door, Harry slowly made his way in that direction, not certain what to do now.

"Who is it?" came scratchy voice, as Hermione heard his footsteps echoing throughout the room.

"Room service..." Harry replied, trying to make things light.

"Harry? What are you doing here?"

"Looking for you."

"Go away! This is girls bathroom."

"Well, OK. I'll wait outside..." Harry said, and turned around to do just that.

"Just go away! Why would anyone bother with someone like me..." was said in a breaking voice.

"And who someone like you would be?"

At that Hermione got very quiet, mumbling something incoherent between short intakes of breath.

"Let me guess. Someone said something mean to you and you get back at them by locking yourself here... I must say this plan of your's is a little too complicated for me, but if you thought it out, I am sure they'll regret it in the end..."

"Harry, don't be daft!" She snapped at him, but there was a slight chuckle in her voice now.

"Since I'm terrible at guessing, what's wrong?" he asked while sitting and leaning against the wall.

Then Hermione told him how she heard Ron Weasley telling someone how she was awful that no one could stand her, and it was no surprise that she had no friends.

Harry just replied "Well, I'm here."

After a couple of long sniffs, Hermione opened the door, and peaked outside with her puffy eyes, which one trip to school nurse was enough to take care of. That trip was also their excuse for missing class, saying that Hermione didn't feel well, so Harry had to take her.

The rest of the afternoon went without anything happening. After class Harry accompanied Hermione to the common room, because she wasn't feeling like celebrating, and so they missed the whole troll episode that the school was going through.

And even if there are things that in one instant bring people together, being there for each other on daily basis, seems to work better in the long run.

AN. Lets just say that in this fic, this far they did only theory, and sine Charms are less dangerous than Transfiguration or Defence, its their first spell cast in class. That way I don't have to think where to put Magie's reaction.

In how many different ways one have to say "I don't own Harry Potter" to get it through? And to think that people say they understand what they are reading...

November came, and with it Quidditch season. The whole School was buzzing with excitement over the rumour that Harry Potter would be playing as Seeker for Gryffindor. And it was just all right with the whole team, that they talked only about that. Because nothing stayed secret at Hogwarts, so not releasing players list got people suspicious, and they started to dig. Harry playing as Seeker wasn't the real secret. The secret was what he would be riding.

Poffesor McGonagall did bend some rules to allow Harry to have a broom, even thou he was a first year, but it taken her longer than one evening. And so even as she had the broom itself stocked in her private quarters, Harry couldn't use it. It was only a couple weeks later that Wood gave him a Nimbus Two Thousand saying that it was his new broom.

"Wha..?" asked startled Harry.

"Proffesor McGonagall ordered it in your name, so its yours. She kept it while paperwork allowing you to actually have it, was being filled. And we didn't want to make a big scene when it would be delivered to you. Imagine how would it look if you would get this at a meal time."

"Yeah." answered Harry, gazing at his new broom with admiration.

"But I'm not giving you this because you can have it now." that got Wood Harry's full attention again. "I'm giving it to you because you now know how to use it. Riding a old battered broom builds your control skills, cause you can't learn to deal with problems when there is nothing wrong, right? It wouldn't be good giving you fast broom for your first training just so you can crash it..."

So even if whole school knew that Harry would play, barely anybody seen him play, and nobody mentioned his broom at all. And it was how Wood liked it.

But being youngest player in the century, did bring even more attention to Harry. Good as well as bad kind of it. But it wasn't that

bad because Slytherin's were tempered down, since their Head of House was busy with answering questions regarding points that he had taken throughout his teaching career, so he couldn't get his pupils out of trouble as good as he did before. Some of the Slytherins noticed that "Everyone for themselves" wasn't the answer in every situation. As for the rest of the school, they preferred taking jabs at the other team in the spirit of support of their house, rather than hateful taunting just for the fun of it.

But when it came to it, game itself didn't look like anything anyone had expected.

It started as any normal game would, with teams trying to get the upper hand over their rivals. But high above other players and commotion in the stands, Harry circled in search of the Snitch, which showed itself for a moment just to vanish just as fast.

The real turn in the events of the game begun when Harry noticed that he no longer had control over his broom. But then it only got worse as his broom started to gain speed and buckle more violently with every passing second. With one of the more sudden jerk, he was swung off his broom, and had to hang only on his hands. It was in this moment Harry realised that when you found yourself in a situation like this, when you really didn't want to fall, you just couldn't resist to look down. And what he saw there confused him to no end.

Below him, Magie was lying on the field, staring at the sun shining through her fingers on her outstretched hands. At least it looked that way, until he remembered a certain Charms class not so long ago. As soon he remembered it, he just let go.

Whole school watched in horror as Harry Potter went into head dive from nearly hundred and fifty feet. But it didn't end with him all over the field, as he began to gradually slow down, making back flip in the last moment to safely land on all fours.

People in the stands were shocked to silence as Gryffindor team went to check on him, one of the Weasley twins with his broom in tow. As they neared him, they saw him shaking, which they could understand as a shock reaction from such a fall. But they couldn't understand why there seemed to be a chuckle ringing through the silence.

Then Harry lifted his head and grinned at them with Snitch held tightly between his teeth. After that there was nothing anyone could say any more. There was only so much shock you could live through in couple of minutes time.

Of course, when people came down from the emotions, there was loudest cheer that this particular Quidditch pitch ever heard, and a party to celebrate a catch that would remembered for a long time.

AN. If you want to complain that he wouldn't be powerful enough to do that at such a young age... then I say that I'm a fan of idea that magic is divided into power, intent and will. Maybe he wasn't powerful enough, but he had a lot of will to not die. Or he released nearly all his magic in that spell. Or... Its a fiction, deal with it and go bother someone else.

I must say that this latest edition of "not me" is making J. K. Rowling a little left out. But if anybody would ask me, I would have to play it to...

If speculations before the game, about if Harry would be any good, was topic entire school talked about, conversations after it didn't even compare, even thou topic was changed. Now nobody asked if Harry could play. Now they argued what stunt will he do next. Half of the school was of the opinion that if this was just his first game, what would follow? The other half argued that it was a first impression thing, and you couldn't possibly top that now that people were expecting it.

But even in that madness, there were some that thought just a tad more logically, asking questions that came down to simple "How the hell did he do that?". Harry's account of events was that he was thrown off the broom, and as he was falling, he tried Hover charm that they practiced all week with wand he had hidden in the sleeve of his protective gear. But as with everything that had a celebrity, a major event, and some amount of uncertainty in it, soon gossip blossomed and with time matured to something of a conspiracy theory, with Harry Potter, secret training, and overwhelming powers in the middle.

Harry could nearly believe the story he used to explain his survival, if not for jumping instead of being thrown off, the thing with him not casting any kind of spell, and of course, fact that there was no wand anywhere near him. So, using the chaos, he himself had to think what happened that day.

'Ruining the carpet won't help you much.' Magie told him a couple of days later, as he paced the common room at a late night hour, again being unable to sleep. 'Relax.'

Harry dragged his feet to an armchair, weary of some of the ideas that were swimming in his head. He sat down, closed his eyes and took a couple of deep breaths. When he felt a little more relaxed, he opened his eyes again, and saw that Magie now sat cross legged on a table right in front of him.

'Any ideas?' asked Harry after couple of minutes of silence while they only looked at each other.

'Maybe this, there is a saying... what was it exactly...' he waited while Magie formulated her thoughts. 'Ah, yes. It says something about answer staring you in the face.' at which she looked at him meaningfully. Harry almost slapped himself on the forehead over the pun that she just made.

'Yes, I know that it was you. But I don't know how...'

'Well, I told you already that I can feel what you want or intend to do. You didn't want to break your neck falling from that broom, so you didn't.'

'But isn't magic supposed to be done with wands?' Harry asked while retrieving mentioned object from his pocket and looking at it as if to find an answer written over it.

'If it is like that, then how did those strange incidents were possible when you didn't know about magic at all?' responded Magie.

In fact, Harry didn't think about this before. On the sorting nights feast, first years talked about how they knew they were magical, trading stories about different accidents that happened to them when they were young. Anybody magical did it before, and when they got to school they were handed wands straight away. Now that Harry thought about it, it was like anybody who had hands and instead of learning how to paint, play an instrument or just write, would go to computer and generate an image, put some sounds together in a program, or use a keyboard.

Of course some may say that tools like computers make things faster and better... Of course they do, but time spend to master such a tool, know how it worked and be somewhat proficient in using it still counts as the time you practice your skills. And after all that learning you need to practice loads more to produce something that anybody would say is good, not even a masterpiece, from the masses of people that use the same tool. After all, easier to do, doesn't equal better results.

Of course tools are useful. But, as always, those tools have to be there and be ready to be used. Without electricity the whole information system, every phone, TV, radio wouldn't work. Without fuel people living on the outskirts of big cities wouldn't know how to get to work or for shopping because it was such a long way. Then all

the people who depend on their tools would just sit and wonder what to do, and in the meantime all the rest would grab their instruments and play some more music, paint another thing, or just walk or jog to the nearest shop.

Why wouldn't magical community be the same? Use some tools, learn how to operate it, and sit back instead of learning how to use to the fullest what they had from birth.

But that still didn't answer one of his questions.

'Even if I can do it without it, what about magic with it? I couldn't make any spell work.' asked Harry rolling his wand between his fingers and looking at Magie again.

'I don't know. When you do it, I feel a tingling, something like pins and needles. It isn't unpleasant, just itchy. Like I must do something. But since I know what you try to do, why not just ask me for help?'

'Can we try it?' she just nodded. 'Can you lift that pillow?' asked Harry pointing to the couch, at which Magie's laughter rang through his head. 'What are you laughing at?' he asked while glaring at her.

'How many times I have to tell you I can feel it, you don't have to say it. Just concentrate on it.'

Harry looked back at the pillow and concentrated, nearly imagined, that it lifted into the air. After a moment it really did. He looked back at Magie, but she wasn't there any more. In fact, she wasn't anywhere to be seen. At his surprise, the pillow fell back on the couch.

'You have to concentrate dummy.'

'Right, you don't have to be here, to be here.' though Harry to himself.

'Want to try something else?'

'Maybe some other time. I need to find out how this thing works before I do some stupid mistake that can't be reversed or something like that.' at that, he could hear her giggle. 'I think I'll go to sleep

now.' He stood up and went to bed, with totally different set of questions to investigate.

AN. That saying "I don't have to be here, to be here". There was a fic (don't really know if it was parody) but it had someone imitating Dumble-speech, saying something without really saying anything. In the original it went "As soon as we'll know, we'll know." Anybody know this fic, I just cant find it.

There are many fics saying that wizards are lazy and illogical or anything like that, because they don't have to be, they have magic. May I point out that they are still people? Wizards are us after a couple generations, if we were handed a never ending wishing well, or something like that.

You won't find my name at the end of "Harry Potter is owned by" if you type it in Google...

After that night, Harry went to the library at any opportunity, and spent there as much time as he could. Of course, Hermione would be there most of the times too, and they soon came up with a schedule of doing homework and extracurricular reading. Neville would join them for the homework part, always complaining how useless it would be for him to study in advance if he couldn't even master what they were learning at that time. Hermione would usually tell him that it is better to read up, because even if you don't understand everything, when the time comes, you at least know what to look at to see important points. Harry on the other hand would say that he was selling himself cheap because of his low confidence.

Between homework, classes and Quiddich practices, Harry didn't have much time to find what part of magic Magie fit into. In fact, he only started with that, but number of questions multiplied with every passing minute spent in the library. It is if a child ask simply if people can fly, seeing somewhere a bird, and you hand it books for maths, physics, navigation, modern technology... simply put everything you need to build and fly a plane. So, it wasn't any surprise that even as Christmas break came, Harry didn't accomplish anything more than make himself more and more confused with mass of information that he had read so far.

It wasn't any surprise either, that with his mind trying thing any connection between what he had read lately and what was happening with his magic, he was walking not really looking where he was going. But it wasn't common occurrence when he bumped into someone while doing it. This particular surprise happened when he was leaving Potions classroom, and everyone suddenly stopped moving. Looking around he noticed blocked exit, but more importantly Weasley and Malfoy going at each other.

Fight didn't get too far because Snape showed up, and of course started docking points from Gryffindor, even thou Hagrid told him that it was a provoked attack.

"Be as it may, Fighting is against Hogwarts rules." was all he said at that. All that was done in mid stride, like he wasn't even paying

attention. Well until a voice reached him from the silence that spread among the students.

"Fighting is against Hogwarts rules, but insulting others is not?" asked Harry from his spot in the crowd, which immediately parted to let the new character onto the stage.

Snape had to stop his march and grit his teeth when he saw that innocently curious look on Potters face. "Malfoy, 2 points from Slytherin for badly worded opinion." As much as he didn't want to do it, he was caught in the middle of explaining himself from his entire career as a teacher and didn't need anything new, no matter how small, on the books. But while doing so he gave a pointed look to the young snake, who understood the hidden meaning as 'Don't be so obvious about it'.

After Snape walked away and Hagrid cleared the corridor everyone moved, seeing clearly that the show was over. When Harry arrived at the Great Hall and saw decorations, he realised that this was in fact last day of classes before the break. He was staying in the castle, but it was more for the reason of nearly unrestricted time in the library more than going back to the Dursley's.

It wasn't that he hated it. It wasn't even about him having any particular feelings about it. Christmas at Dursley's was more about appearances than about real "Christmas spirit". First one that Harry could remember was like he was included in a battle strategy. Everyone had their positions and jobs to cover for it to work out. Of course Harry would do the chores and stay out of the way at the actual celebration, but he still knew about the plans regarding every event that happened during those days, and after you saw it couple of times, it was like listening to an old squeeze box. And no matter how lovely the tune is at first, when you hear it long enough you begin to notice the imperfections, like when a guest already knew a joke uncle Vernon was saving for that particular moment in the conversation, or when someone scratched holiday service of aunt Petunia, or even not so uncommon occasion that Dudley was too bored with his job to see it through. So, it was to Harry's advantage to be left out of it, having time for himself instead of being there to play part in the show. He heard about it enough as it was. And if he were to be there, he would no doubt be blamed about any mishap.

Staying in the castle during the break, at least in theory, wasn't much different than going back. He still stayed mostly alone trying to figure things out. But people didn't have the same reasons that Dursleys had to leave him alone. At Hogwarts he was mostly regarded as a mysterious saviour of the magical world, but there was also a part of the community who wouldn't bother him because of the Snape incident. Some couldn't comprehend what was really happening and others were still mad at him because they were caught in the most violent of Potions Masters outbursts. And, obvious reason why Hogwarts wasn't the same (totally omitting the comparison between a magical castle and a house in the suburbs) was that he had quite different set of things to think about.

But it all came to an end when he woke up on the Christmas day, and saw a small pile of packages at the foot of his bed. And with every passing present, it was more and more bizarre one. It relatively normal, with a box of Chocolate Frogs from Hermione. Well, if you can call charmed candies "relatively normal". Then it was a flute that, Harry guessed, was handmade by Hagrid. He mused a while at the meaning of this, and had a funny idea of Hagrid performing in a band on variety of instruments. But when he shook his head to clear his mind from that particular idea, he saw that there was a nicely looking Christmas card that the two previous presents were holding down.

On the back of it was written "We received your message and wish you a Merry Christmas." signed by Dursley's family as a whole. Harry thought that if anybody saw this card, it would be quickly dismissed as one that you send to a friend or relative that couldn't make it for the celebration, so completely normal. But it was quite a shock to see something like that, when at every other time it would be something closer to "If you know a way to completely vanish, do it.". And the weirdest part was that when he opened the last package, he was in possession of something that allowed him to do just that.

From the start he didn't know who it was from, so he opened it carefully, finding a note on the top of a strange looking material. Seeing that it was his father's, he picked the cloak up and put it on his shoulders, just to see how it would fit him, if he was similar in build to his father, forgetting for the moment that he was only eleven years old. But when he looked down to tie it in place, he couldn't pull up the sleeves that were too long for him, because he couldn't see

his hands. Moving to the mirror, he saw that everything that was covered by cloak, wasn't reflected.

He took it off, like always not wanting to use anything he didn't know about, and getting into trouble over some stupid mistake. But then he remembered that it was a present, and after hiding the cloak in his trunk, he looked at the note once more trying to think who might have sent it. But he didn't get too far with that because a half hearted "Merry Christmas" reached his ears.

Looking up, he saw that Ron Weasley, the only other boy from their year to stay for the break, finally woke up. After yawning widely, he began to tore into his own pile of presents, considerably larger than Harry's. When he was done, he started to change into his things, his mood worsened by another maroon sweater. Ron was from the group in the castle that didn't like Harry because of what happened at every Potions lesson, and as he was in the same class, he was caught in the epicentre. Seeing a opportunity to take a jab at him, he said "Your presents are waiting in another room, so normal people don't get overwhelmed right?"

"What are you talking about?" asked Harry who looked up being suddenly pulled out of his thoughts.

"All that fan mail have to take loads of space..."

"What fan mail?" Harry was getting more and more confused, not making out what it really was about.

But whatever Ron was about to say, he didn't get to it as the door to the dormitory was flung open and the Weasley Twins bounded in with a loud "Merry Christmas". Then commenced a brotherly banter in which Percy got somehow caught in. Harry on the other hand minded his own business readying himself for another day, until "...even Harry will sit with us right?" which turned out to be Twins trying to convince Percy to sit with the common men instead of the higher ups. Not waiting for an answer the Twins shouted at everyone to get ready and went along their way.

Harry just shrugged, now that he couldn't do anything about him, and went back to his trunk to pick up wearable clothes, from everything that he got from Dursley's. But when Twins mentioned him, Ron remembered that Harry was in the room too, and he

looked at Harry like he saw him for the first time. Why would saviour of the world be dressing in rags? Even his clothes that he got from his brothers didn't look that worked and patched up. The only new things that Harry had, seemed to be the things that every first year student bought. And only three presents for Christmas? If you could call what was now on Harry's bedside table presents, more like tokens really, while there were thousands wizards practically singing prayers about him. Even someone as hard headed as Ron could see that things weren't adding up with what he thought.

When Harry finally was ready to leave, he noticed Ron staring at him strangely. Taking a while to see if he wanted anything from him, he left confused at what really happened. Because how he was to know that Ron tried to find a way fit his imagined vision of pampered hero, getting whatever he wanted and getting away with doing anything he liked, into what he just now noticed about Harry.

Sometime during the day, Harry had to duck from the festivities, because if muggles were crazy with all the preparations, shopping, and decorating to be too stressed out or tired to make the fullest of the actual free time, wizards were crazy with what they did to celebrate, because everything before didn't take any time at all when done with magic. If they didn't eat, they played games, when they didn't do that, they were probably too tired to do much, so they rested until they could move again, but until then, they still had fun with magic. It was craziest variant of normal Christmas that Harry could think of.

So, when everyone else went for another round of snowball fighting, he lied that he forgot his gloves, and looked for somewhere to take a longer rest, from all that working out after heavy food that he could hardly eat any more of.

That's how he ended up in a room with the strangest mirror he had ever seen. There he saw himself among other people, some of which he guessed were his relatives. It was quite moving, and somewhat shocking, seeing his parents for the first time. The shocking part was that they were talking with Magie, and among other people in the mirror there were more of those peculiar conversations. Muggle's, wizards, friends of Magie were all mixed among each other talking to one another about something or other that he couldn't hear through the glass. And at whatever group he

looked, they stopped and looked at him, probably waiting to hear his point of view on the actual subject.

When he finally got his mind back on track and started to look around to see if by some coincidence this vision wasn't true, he noticed the carvings on the to, gazing into the mirror and up again, he had to smile how a stupid mistake in grade school with letters wrote wrongly and teacher bringing a hand mirror to show you mistake, helps with answering a riddle in a magical world. After realising that it was getting late and one last look into the glass, he walked out of the room, just to bump into the Twins at the end of the corridor.

"And we so much wanted to come to your rescue." they said together.

"Well, thanks. I think that at some point I walked through a short-cut or something like that and I didn't know where I was." he quickly lied. "But how did you guys know where to look for me?" he asked first, not wanting to explain himself why it took him such a long time to come back.

"That, our young friend..." began one of the two.

"...is a pranksters secret." finished the other.

"If you will prove yourself... maybe one day... we'll share it with you." they continued speaking in similar fashion, saying the last part together with mischievous grins. As everyone else, Twins knew that Harry was responsible for the situation that Snape was now stuck in, and they couldn't wait what else could he come up with, because it was a true revelation to them that you could pull something like that, not only without breaking any rules, but without even trying very hard.

"Maybe later, now we still need to go back." answered Harry, after which they went to continue the celebration.

Late into the night, finding himself unable to sleep after all the heavy food, he at last had time to reflect on the events of that day.

'Have any good bedtime stories?' at which he immediately looked on his headboard, but he didn't find her there. After checking every

possible place, he had to roll his eyes at where she would be now. But while doing that, he spotted Magie lying upside-down on the roof of his four poster bed.

'Why do you usually show up when I'm alone and assume the most ridiculous position imaginable?'

'Well, for the first one, It would be weird if you had to concentrate what to say out loud and what to say to me, if we were to talk in a crowd. And for the other, it's only ridiculous to you, to me, its quite comfortable... But I asked first if you had any bedtime stories for me.' at which Harry begun to describe events of the day.

'So, what's going to happen with the cloak?' she asked after he was done.

'I think I will leave it where it is, hidden in my trunk. If it is some lost forgotten relative or friend, then it looks like he just found this while cleaning, and remembered to return it. That someone don't really care what I do with it, and it can really get me in trouble. But if it is someone who really know that it is time and I am ready to have it, then he was checking on me, at least from time to time. Why not give it to me in person? Or maybe even someone needs me to do something with it... Its just so confusing, and I don't want to make it worse by doing something stupid.'

'And why didn't you find the mirror interesting enough to stay longer?' was her next question.

'Because if you put two mirrors near each other, like you have to do to read the writing at the top, and make them reflect one another, you can see something similar to a tunnel. And the nearer they are together, the further down the tunnel you can see. If you press them flat against each other, it would be safe to assume that you can see as far as infinity goes, but then you can't see the reflections... so the infinity looks the way you want it to, because you have no way of checking if it is true, and no proof that it isn't.'

'But there should be two mirrors put together.'

'And there were.'

At her confused look, he had to explain once again.

'People are mirrors, but not flat ones. If you pick one person and quiz about the world, some matters will be closer to them and some things won't interest them at all. Different people have different "reflections" on the world. That's why they can't pick one greatest thing in the world, because there is always someone who will think otherwise. That mirror just shows what I would like most.'

'And what would you like?'

'Like you said it yourself, just to be accepted.' he said with a smile on his face, and with the vision from the mirror, he at last fell into peaceful sleep.

AN. If you want to bash me that an eleven-year-old shouldn't say thinks like in the last part, then I say to you that "age" doesn't really have anything to do with when you were born, just when and how you start to grow up.

Now, the part about Christmas at Dursley's was written while I was watching a re-run of Chamber of Secrets in the TV, so it should be obvious from where I got the general idea.

Christmas card. They never got him any presents, so a Christmas card wasn't such a bad start indicating that what he said before had made (even slightest) impression on them. And besides, in canon they sent him fifty pence, how much more would you pay for a Christmas card? I bet it was more difficult for them to receive and send back the message, probably delivered by owl.

In canon, Harry was shy and kept to himself because of his upbringing. In this story he will still keep to himself (at least as long as it will suit me), but from different reasons. Its because if you leave children to make rules of the society just by observation, and show to them people who say one thing and then do something else, you don't get a trusting people as a result. And as I wrote before, Harry in this story is just the case.

Now, Harry by himself is fine by me for now, because ideas that I have don't fit into this time period. I have things planned a little for every year but mostly for the third and fourth, at which I don't know if to continue this story, end it (that's why most plans regard this point) and write sequel, or write totally different story. But back to the point.

For now I will have Harry to read and study on magical theory. But that gives me another problem, one that if I do a theory, I like for it to be a good one. Complications right and left, but in the end, its more fun this way.

Can anyone guess what I mean by "just being accepted" in regards of this vision in Mirror of Erised?

Still don't own Harry Potter, thanks for asking.

When classes started, Harry again had too little time and sometimes was too tired to concentrate on reading. Because if earlier Woods training techniques were tiring, now they became murderous. Announcement that Snape was refereeing didn't uplift teams spirit either.

"He's not going to be fair."

"Who made that decision and how drunk was he?"

"Is Hooch really that ill or something?"

Those and many more complains reached Woods ears after he told them that. Harry on the other hand wanted to know more, so when everybody calmed down he asked:

"Does he know ALL the rules?"

"What do you mean?" asked Wood, sensing that there was more.

"You don't bring people out of the street to referee a match, even when they know how game looks like, simply because there might be some sensitive rules or precedents..." Harry answered speculatively.

"Yes?" everyone asked at once, because from team support and better grasp on situation, they simply loved him for what he did to Snape last time.

"If we and Hufflepuffs don't like that Snape is refereeing, why don't we make it that he don't?"

Everybody thought about it for a while, and then grinned at each other. Training was ended for the day, and team spread throughout the castle to talk some more about what to do with that match.

Harry went back to Gryffindor tower to change and then for some more reading time, but while he was walking to the library he came across Neville hopping in direction of the common room.

"Harry, help!" he said leaning against a wall, breathing heavily from the work out.

"What happened to you?" Harry said while coming closer to him.

"Malfoy. I met him outside the library. Can you help me?"

"You got your wand?"

"Yes." Neville said while getting it from his pocket.

"Why not use it?"

"But I don't know the counter curse!" he said while getting a little depressed at how useless he was.

"Professor Flitwick taught us universal one." retorted Harry.

Neville looked at his wand, hesitating to use it, partly because he didn't want to make it worse, and in part because he didn't want another proof that he couldn't use magic.

"Just try it." Harry said, and when Neville looked at him, he simply nodded.

Concentrating, Neville did the Finite spell on his legs, and was released from the Leg-Locker Curse that Malfoy put on him.

"You see, you can do just fine on your own."

"But I can't. I loose my head and don't know what to do near people like Malfoy." said Neville in a small voice.

"You know, I think you should help him..."

"H-Help him?" asked quite baffled at what Harry just said.

"Yes. You should help him hide from Snape..." after which they had a conversation about small steps in improving yourself, because you couldn't expect to be first in everything, and getting depressed that you aren't don't get you anywhere. But by slowly working in your own pace, even if it is a little slower than anyone's else, in time may

get you to mastery. But, more important than that, they talked about what to do with people who are too full of themselves.

Time went by seemingly uneventfully, and at last, the day of match between Gryffindor and Hufflepuff came. It started pretty much normal. Teams went to get ready for the game while people got comfortable in the stands. Though it was quite a surprise that Dumbledore was attending the game, it wasn't unseen. Players got in positions, chest with balls was placed in the centre. All was set to go.

But it all went wrong after Snape announced to start the game. Truthfully, it didn't go anywhere... The only players that moved were beaters who intercepted bludgers and started to play a ping-pong kind of game between themselves. Rest of the players went to the middle and had a nice conversation tossing quaffle between themselves, not paying attention to stands full of people and especially to Snape, who at first was confused but now was shouting at them to play.

They ignored him, because as far as the rules went, balls were in play, and game couldn't end until the snitch was caught. There was simply no precedent to players not moving during the game, as long as there was no foul play which kept them immobilised.

After the training Harry made his suggestion, they went to Hufflepuffs team and thought together how to deal with situation that would be good for both teams, but not for Snape. And after going through rules book back and forth couple of times, they came up with this. As said before there was no previous situation to that kind of behaviour. But in the longest Quidditch game there was a case where they needed not only reserve players, but reserve referees as well. So, both teams went on adding people from backup list to their trainings, which ended up as normal Quidditch matches played on training time.

Now they only needed to wait long enough that Snape was too tired to referee.

Surprisingly they didn't need to wait as long as they expected, because not so long into non-game there was commotion in the stands. After all explaining was done it will be clear that Neville as always was late, and going alone, attracted attention of Malfoy who

was just leaving moaning about stupidity of that game. Malfoy seeing a source of entertainment at once begun to taunt and insult Neville who quickly looked around and went even faster in direction of the stands with Malfoy in pursuit shouting louder and louder to make sure that his target heard him over the noise of conversations from the stadium. Malfoy was about to finish particularly snide insult about Gryffindor, when he finally noticed that in his anger at being ignored by Longbottom he came all the way after him to Gryffindor stands, and because of his shouting, his comments were heard by everyone from that House for quite some time. Of course situation was bad, but it got worse when Crabbe and Goyle started pushing people around to get out. Other Slytherins seeing "fight" begun their own salvo of insults about Gryffindor's always going many on few, totally forgetting about numerous staff near them.

Snape had to be brought down to calm his House and explain the situation before there was a battle in the pitch, and Hooch was again refereeing. Players went on with the plan of normal game with any other referee, but bringing order in the stands took long enough that the game was over before Snape could get back.

Later when Gryffindor's were celebrating Harry's another great catch, Neville thanked him about the tips and had to say that he was right saying that Malfoy would need help to hide from Snape, if the look on Snape's face while he was looking at Malfoy could say anything.

AN. First thing first. I won't be able to post till some time in next month, sorry.

It's a school where you can change your friend into a puddle of goo, if you do something wrong. Normal thing is to teach you how to fix it, just in case you need it, so every student should know at least basic Finite which worked well enough on hexes in duelling club in second book. Wait, I forgot that were talking about Hogwarts. They don't teach anything that can keep you out of trouble, right?

Neville had some moments in the books showing that he could take care of himself, most memorable being Department affair. Now, if at every time people would show him how to do some things, but not do it for him, wouldn't it add to his knowing that he could manage on his own?

Malfoy is in Slytherin. Slytherins are supposed to be cunning. But until sixth year while he was working on the cabinet, I just don't remember him being cunning. I remember him telling anyone he thought was weaker than him how superior he is (as long as there wasn't any professor in sight), but getting beaten in the end. What's cunning about that?

Snape is supposed to have control over his feelings and everything. But there are moments when he is shown to lose his cool. Like when Harry sees his memories at one legilimency lesson, or nearly getting into a fight with Sirius in Grimmauld kitchen. And I think that he doesn't get frustrated because he can insult nearly anyone he wants. But if you make him "play nice", and the fact that Potter was again pranking him... Wouldn't he get frustrated? I'm not a Snape lover, but I don't think that anyone is "beyond redeeming". Only thing is, that person first needs to at least begin to change, and until then, they deserve to be treated just like they treat others. So, I think I will bash Snape for quite some time, if not till the end of this story.

Every time I write a chapter I sit and think of a new way to tell you that I'm not the owner of Harry Potter... Hmm... This was fast...

Since Slytherin's made their business private, no one knew what really happened to Draco Malfoy. All they knew was that he disappeared from the school entirely, under excuse of "detentions". But it was quickly forgotten when teachers begun revision of years material on top of already planned lessons. As for Harry, it didn't change his schedule much, because he filled extracurricular reading time in the library with additional homework.

"I'm done for today. You guys?" asked Neville while gathering up his books.

"Yeah, I'm finishing last chapter." replied Harry. "Hermione?"

"Oh no. After I finish this essay I have to re-read couple of chapters..." said a girl in the middle of sea of notes and islands of books on top of it.

"Hermione, would you say that mind is like your body and needs to be trained to be in shape?" asked Harry.

"Well, yes..." was a careful reply.

"What would you do to your body if you would participate in Strong Man competition every single day?"

She tried to formulate an answer, but after noticing how much reading material was on her part of the table, all she could do was to give them a sheepish smile.

"Oh, all right. Short break couldn't hurt. I just need to gather everything..." she again looked at the pile... hill... small mountain of notes.

"I need to feed Trevor, so I can take our bags to the common room." proposed Neville.

After he was gone Harry and Hermione begun to place books back on their rightful place. They were nearly done when they spotted a giant jammed between the bookshelves.

"Hey Hagrid." they said together, which made him jump and drop books he was currently looking at.

"Oh, Hi, er..." he replied while trying to pick up books from the floor and put them back on the shelf in a way that would hide the titles. Being who he was, he failed spectacularly.

"Looking for something specific in dragon's section?"

"Well, just something to read..."

"You're just reading Dragon Breeding for Pleasure and Profit?" asked Hermione while bending her head to better see title of the book that was sticking out of his pocket.

"Well... I... you see..." the hill sized man stammered while quickly looking around "Can we discuss this in my hut?" he finally managed to suggest.

They shrugged and after finishing cleaning their work space, they went with Hagrid to his hut, just to be confronted with a huge black egg, and a story from overjoyed Hagrid about how he got it.

"But aren't dragons dangerous?" asked Hermione while giving egg residing in the fire a doubtful look.

"Oh, not so much. They're just misunderstood."

"I wouldn't say that." replied Harry, who was looking through the book that Hagrid got out of the library.

"What do you mean?" asked Hermione and Hagrid together.

"I wouldn't say they aren't dangerous with their armour of scales, sharp things sticking from nearly every place on their body, and fiery breath." answered Harry while flipping another page.

"Bu-But they aren't that violent..." pleaded Hagrid.

"Oh, I didn't say we can't coexist."

"WHAT!" shouted astounded Hermione.

"Nature have language of its own. There are certain colours, sounds, even smells that state "don't come near, or it will hurt" or when it comes to predators simply "RUN!". Animals know it from birth, or they don't grow up to be large animals. Humans on the other hand don't really care for those signs, because they can simply exterminate everything they don't like. So you get people putting houses in hunting territory, and then calling beast anything with fangs that comes to your home in the middle of the night in search of food. Living beside dangerous species is possible. Taking everything for ourself without a fight, not much so. Ah, here it is." said Harry finally finding information he was looking for. Placing the book in front of them, he pointed one particular passage.

...Norwegian Ridgeback dragon's, due to topography of the country they are native to, live in caves or grotto's high over their hunting grounds, which most commonly are found in fjord's. Their black coloured bodies, help them to hide and hunt down prey in the shade of the hill or even at night, and their slim and long body allow them to hunt underwater by fly-diving. Due to their upbringing on steep surface, they learn to fly and hunt in 6 to 8 weeks after birth, much faster than average dragon. Dragon breeders should be cautioned against keeping growing Norwegian Ridgeback in closed space for long period of time, which can produce claustrophobia leading to violent behaviour...

They looked around the hut, which wouldn't be enough even for a half-grown dragon.

"So..." began Hermione breaking a long time of silence and looking first at Hagrid, who was sitting silently with downcast eyes, and then at Harry who was looking at the egg... "I know that look." she said at his thoughtful expression.

"What?" asked the raven haired boy brought from his thoughts, and after noticing state Hagrid was in he said. "I wouldn't worry about what will happen to your dragon. All we need is couple of letters." and he begun to explain what he thought was best to be done with an illegal dragon.

Time again resumed its normal course of flowing. Well as normal as it could when in magical surrounding. And like it was with time, people spent it to fulfil their plans, be it just studying, getting date for next

Hogsmade weekend, even to those illegal... But for now, we should focus on revenge.

Draco Malfoy, even after all his punishment, couldn't control his ambitions, and right after getting back to general population, he begun to look for opportunity to get Longbottom in trouble. At least, that was his plan, until he noticed Potter's suspicious behaviour with his trips between library, owlery and that savages house for some kind of meeting behind closed doors and windows, always carrying some papers. It was just too evident that something was going on, and what would be better than putting Golden Boy in trouble. He was slowly losing patience, till one day he caught sight of Longbottom, Potter and some girl hurrying to the hut, and a sign of newly hatched dragon was enough for him to go and report it.

Some twenty minutes later he was getting frustrated, having to repeat the same story about a dragon on school grounds, first to his Head of House then Headmaster, and finally to an auror who was brought due to regulations concerning this kind of situation.

"How many times I have to tell you that they have a baby dragon in there. They have to be expelled for it and..." but he didn't finish his animated speech, because Professor McGonagall entered Headmasters office with Harry Potter in tow.

"Excuse me, is it a bad time Headmaster?" asked transfiguration teacher while looking at the people gathered in the room.

"That depends what is it about, Minerva." replied the oldened wizard.

"Potter, if you will?" she said to her student.

"Yes, Professor. Headmaster Dumbledore, I would like to notify you about new dangerous animal on school ground and file paperwork for it's immediate transfer to a suitable reserve." Harry said in his most formal manner.

"What kind of animal?" he asked while looking over his half-moon spectacles between Malfoy and Harry.

"Baby dragon, sir."

Dumbledore just raised an eyebrow, Snape kept his poker face. Malfoy stood there, not understanding what was happening. Auror on the other hand, took the situation in totally different light than just some stupid kid exaggerating seeing a bat up close with dragon attack. Telling it differently, he started to freak out.

"You mean to tell me that there REALLY is an illegal dragon this close to kids?" he asked like he heard it first time, and mentioned dragon stood right behind him.

"A baby dragon, yes. But he's not illegal."

"WHAT? But laws forbid breeding dragons outside of reserves." said Malfoy who just reached his limit.

"Yes, but in case of illegal breeding grounds, qualified personnel can requisite any eggs or animals and place them in properly manned post. Rubeus Hagrid, as a Gamekeeper, having a choice between a dragon omelet and another dragon from a rare breed... Well, lets just say it wasn't a though choice. Paperwork informing that he was in possession of an egg of Norwegian Ridgeback was filled shortly after he acquired it." in the middle of Harry's speech auror begun calling the ministry to verify it. Harry seeing that auror was still busy handed Dumbledore the transfer paperwork.

"Norberta?" asked amused wizard seeing first page of the form.

"Well, we wrote first name that came to our heads, but then it turned out that dragon was a girl..."

"Why wasn't this transfer form filed in earlier?" interrupted him auror who finished checking everything in the ministry, but still had to find some fault in the situation.

"It couldn't be any earlier." answered Harry.

"Why is that?"

"Because even if egg was here for a long time, dragon hatched only some thirty minutes ago."

"Dragon, dragon egg. I don't see any difference." replied auror in "who cares" kind of way.

"Well, dragons fly and breathe fire, while eggs are round and do only the breaking part." was Harry's own reply, delivered with a straight face.

After auror stopped and checked how conversation ended with such a sentence, he asked in different words, while closing his eyes and rubbing his temples to prevent a headache.

"I was trying to ask, why it is so important to wait till after the hatching."

"Well, egg once placed in the fire, must stay there undisturbed until the hatching. But even if there was a way to slow dying of the egg itself without any interference to the developing dragon, those forms needs information like gender, which can be checked only after dragon is out of the egg, or that tricky line when they ask age... of the dragon." Harry said last thing with slight smile on his face.

"But still, that egg was here without the knowledge of authorities." accused auror who still tried to make his intervention be a reasoned one.

"That isn't quite true." said Professor McGonagall who till this point stayed quiet. "Mister Potter came to me, a Deputy Headmistress, with this matter, since as Head of Gryffindor, he could reach me faster than Headmaster. I told him that since everything was well taken care of, he just keep me in touch. Today we are here just to notify Headmaster about people coming to take the dragon."

"Okay. Then tell me one thing. If all the paperwork is on Rubeus Hagrid, then why am I speaking to you?" asked auror looking through forms, trying to find any kind of mistake in it.

"Because someone had to stay near the egg, or now, the dragon, to make sure it was safe and not a threat to anyone at the same time. I was just helping Hagrid by carrying paperwork while he did it. Is there anything more? I wouldn't want to miss my next class, and morning break is nearly out..." Harry finally asked.

Dumbledore looked at the auror, who after flipping pages of the form couple of times more, just nodded his head.

"You may go Harry." said the Headmaster.

After Harry and McGonagal left the office, Snape and Malfoy were trying to follow but auror stopped young snake.

"Young man, do you know that there is a fine for unjustified call of a auror?"...

Next Saturday, our hero was allowed, together with Neville and Hermione, to accompany Hagrid and see Norbert being taken to a Romanian Dragon Reserve, where he would stay if more suitable one won't be available. Norway was no longer a place for a reserve, because fjords were too big of a tourist attraction, both in muggle and magical world, to accommodate such an establishment.

Going back to Gryffindor tower together, Neville had to ask.

"How did you know it would work?"

"Because there is no better way of dealing with illegal stuff, than making authorities take it of your hands themselves."

AN. Even though I'm home from some time, I was too tired to really write. Firstly I did something like 300km on foot, and when I came back I had to travel some more... First part of this chapter was written like one sentence a day. On the brighter side, while on the first part of the trip, I met a girl that looked and acted like older version of Magie. No kidding. Those were some crazy 10 days.

Back to the story. I once saw Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, but don't really remember anything from there any more. Can anyone check if what I wrote on Ridgebacks is somewhat consistent with it? Description itself came from Norbert looking like a cross between a bat and crocodile (or alligator have longer snout?), and fact that they come from Norway.

As for Norbert, it's another plot twist to make Harry go to the forbidden forest. But how believable is that Dumbledore who supposedly know nearly everything that is going on in school omits four people sweeping through it (not counting Harry and Hermione) in the middle of the night. Powerful wards in sixth book can be

explained by that they were activated after Voldemort came back, but shouldn't there be some passive ones at all times?

You fill in Draco's punishment yourself, I didn't have time for it. My first idea would be that Snape took his time to teach him some Slytherin ways, that's why he didn't go to normal class having private tutoring. But with all this stress put on Snape, those lessons wouldn't be nicest ones. But hey, be creative for yourself.

I owned Harry Potter once. Yeah, I know that it's a stupid nick when you're playing a...Oh, THAT Harry Potter. No, sorry, it ain't me.

With the dragon situation solved, there ought to be some free time for our hero. But no such luck. Because of the exams, teachers threw more and more work at them. Instead of having more time, Harry was running out of it so fast he sometimes thought he was skipping days entirely.

This ended only when Harry's final exam was over, and he had to laugh at the memory of pantomime that he had to do on practical exams. To everyone around, it looked like a proper piece of magic. But only when you would look from a backstage seat, you would see Puppet-Harry waving a piece of wood, while Director-Magie sat at the console operating all the special effects. As funny of a picture it was, it still was essentially true. Of all the magic words that he spoke during those exams, only one working was "Please" when he asked Magie to help him.

But even after all that work, he had too long list of things to do and research to be wasting any amount of time. So, straight from History of Magic exam, he went to library for some books and then to a secluded place for some undisturbed reading. The only problem with that, was that due to the earlier time-skipping-whirlwind of studying, he went into the books so deep, that he didn't notice how late it was getting.

"Oh, I'm so late." Harry kept repeating while hurrying through halls of the castle. He was so worked up to get back to common room that he didn't even notice when he passed Professor McGonagall and Dumbledore speaking animatedly in the entrance hall. Nor did he notice that Headmaster saw him wandering after curfew, at which his eyes widened before he speed off, leaving confused transfiguration teacher behind.

The next day there was a lot of commotion over a story about Professor Quirrell dying in a tragic accident while working in the third-floor corridor... Story itself wasn't that interesting. What brought out the commotion was that everyone knew it was just a cover story, and started to dig for what really happened. But, they didn't try so hard or so long as to find anything out. First because no one really liked Quirrell, and the second because exam results soon took first place in everyone's mind.

End of year feast was no surprise either. Gryffindor won, due to their spectacular quidditch team, getting just ahead of Ravenclaw's, who had best lesson-work related results. Slytherin's were last, because their misbehaviour lost them too many points.

After the feast, it seemed that there was just enough time for packing and saying goodbye's before they were once again aboard Hogwart's express, heading home.

AN. I know what you're thinking. "WHAT? No Philosopher Stone? No Voldemort, running around and everything? Didn't you say that Harry would be more aware or something?..." Calm down, calm down. Breathe...

I think I did good job at showing that Harry is more aware, if not about everything going around, then that there is always something you can do with the situations you are concerned about. The thing is, in the book Harry was told all his life, probably every day, to not touch, not do, not ask... and shortly after being introduced to magical community, that goes out of the window and he begin to run rampant after everything even slightly suspicious. Okay, even if you tell me it's because of the new setting he thought that there would be no one to "control" him, it all started with a brown package from a vault, which he remembered clearly among all those magical things he saw touring a hidden district...

Ranting done, sorry for this chapter being so short but I had to wrap this year up and start to explain things like why Harry don't have nightmares or scar-pains. I bet you thought I forgot about that. Well I didn't, and I need to move things in that direction, so I should add another chapter very shortly.

(After looking through my fridge) Sorry, I don't own any amount of Harry Potter, would you care for some yoghurt instead?

Confused and Surprised. Those two words were a good start to describe how Harry felt after he arrived back home. When he departed from the train, he found uncle Vernon waiting for him, but that wasn't that strange. The weird part started after a long, filled with silence ride.

"Come to the living room when you're done with your things." said Vernon when they crossed the doorstep.

Harry sensing another rules to be added to the mile long list, didn't complain much hefting his trunk to his room. When he came down, he noticed his aunt and uncle already seated in the armchairs.

"Sit." came short order which he quickly complied with.

"Boy, we..." but his uncle stopped himself, which was confusing, he never did it while delivering his speech.

"I meant, Harry." this was surprising part, because they used his name even less. As Harry was about to see, it didn't stop at that.

"Me and your aunt, we had a lot of time to talk, and what you said...What I mean is..." his uncle struggled, clearly uncomfortable with the subject. "We treated you differently because you are different. But we may have overdid it, punishing you too much for normal things. But as for now, as long as you don't do any of that... funny business, we will try and see you as a normal kid."

"Well, I wouldn't worry about that." said Harry finally finding his voice, after a long time just staring at his uncle.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that if i would do any... funny business, They would punish me them self." at which he handed his uncle the note warning not to use magic during holidays.

"What kind of punishment do they mean?" asked Vernon after finishing the note and handing it to his wife.

"Well I don't know, and I don't really want to find out. But Ministry is..."

"Wait, you tell me Ministry knows about... all of that?"

"I mean, the OTHER Ministry..." said Harry, throwing them a meaningful look.

After that, happened something that made Harry fear about integrity of the universe and the space-time continuum. After that, Vernon Dursley begun to ask about magical world, making Harry tell probably everything he knew about how it worked.

Later, lying on his bed, Harry had to wonder what brought this. It couldn't just be couple of words that he told them nearly a year earlier. But time. Time could do it. People all around the world have their conviction's. And no matter what they are, there is always something constant, a certain belief that helps them sort out new ideas between right and wrong. For Dursley's that belief was that "There is no place for uncommon things.", making them act against everything not normal. But if you strike this cord, not even persuading, but hinting "Hey, you aren't that normal yourself." it will have an effect. Of course, at first, they will disregard it as a bogus idea. But if the message is strong enough, it will keep nagging somewhere at the back of their heads, making them consider everything they do, and over time, make them change their beliefs, or their course of action.

Of course the final touch was the revelation that magical world wasn't bunch of school kids, or teenagers right after it, doing whatever they wanted with their magic sticks, but rather well organized community with set of rules of their own and even a police force to keep it all in order. Because, even if slightly disturbed by alien things, Dursley's weren't racist, and could understand concept of different culture. So this new way of perceiving wizards was a new, more comfortable, pair of shoes they could fit in.

From that point on, living in that home wasn't like staying in a prison, but like in a hotel, and doing chores was Harry's rent. And even if their relations stayed somewhat cool, they definitely turned more civil. This new arrangements of course weren't to Dudley's liking, but that just made his parents notice how much he misbehaved, when

they started to pay attention if Harry really did all the things they were going to punish him for.

But new status quo was to be threatened by a visit of a small inhabitant of magical world.

At the day of Harry's birthday Petunia explained to him that they had a long planned dinner with Masons from Vernon's work, that couldn't be cancelled because of birthday of a nephew no one even heard about before. Harry was stunned that they even remembered when it was, forget the celebration, but never even mentioning it before, but of course he understood that changes come gradually. So he was to spend his birthday in his room, opting against going out and not knowing when the dinner ended, as only then he would be able to come back inside.

But when he came to his room after helping his aunt with preparing the meal, he noticed a strange looking creature sitting on his bed. Hearing door closing, he looked with the corner of his eye and saw Magie standing by it. She, sensing his need, after looking at the creature shook her head, thus answering Harry's unasked question if she had brought it.

When he turned his head to the bed, the creature slipped of it and bowed very low, a gesture which Harry immediately returned.

"Harry Potter sir shouldn't be doing that." creature protested after noticing what he did.

Hearing it's voice, Harry hurriedly asked Magie if she could do anything so no one downstairs would hear it too, at which she brought forth a pack of tissues which flew out and plucked themselves between the door and frame, thus silencing the room. Harry just raised his eyebrow, having more important things to do at the moment.

"I thought that it was proper greeting from... well, wherever you come from, and I didn't want to be impolite by not returning it. By the way, who are you?"

At the first part creature looked like it was about to wail, but stopped when was reminded that it haven't introduced itself yet.

"Dobby, sir. Dobby the house-elf."

"And what brought you here, if you don't mind me asking?"

"Harry Potter must not go back to Hogwarts." quickly replied Dobby.

"And is there any reason for that?" asked Harry who was slightly taken aback, not expecting that kind of an answer.

"There is a plot to make most terrible things happen there, Harry Potter sir. Dobby has known it for month's sir. Dobby must warn, but... but..."

"But you can't tell it up front." finished Harry, at which Dobby nodded his head furiously.

Harry stood there a long time, contemplating both message and messenger. Until...

"Why is Harry Potter sir still standing?" brought him from his thoughts.

"Because if it's a longer conversation then everyone should be in the same position, no matter if it's sitting or standing. Oh, I'm sorry, would you like to sit?"

Dobby immediately burst into tears, explaining between hiccups that he never been asked to sit down by a wizard.

"Why is that?" asked Harry after sitting Dobby down, and waiting for him to calm down a bit.

"House-elves are servants and should remain unseen as long as they can, and when addressed to, should be at full attention to fulfil the command." Dobby explained, speaking like he was quoting a rule-book.

"But serving guests shouldn't you be wearing something else?" said Harry pointing old pillowcase.

"Oh no Harry Potter sir. House-elf wear only one thing like this, not clothing, given when he is brought to the family he is about to serve.

Only time that he could be given clothing is when he is released from service."

"So, back to the business. Did someone ask you to come and warn me about what is going to happen at Hogwart?"

"No, Harry Potter sir. Dobby heard about Harry Potter and needs to protect him. Harry Potter sir is too important to be at any kind of danger."

"Protect me? Did you do something else, beside warning me, that I should thank you for?" asked Harry half jokingly, wanting to lighten the atmosphere.

But in response, Dobby started fidgeting, and after a while reached into his pillowcase and extracted a thick wad of envelopes.

"Dobby thought that if Harry Potter won't have any message from magical world, he might not want to come back."

Harry reached for the envelopes, but Dobby just jumped of the bed and out of his reach. He tried again, standing from his chair, but that just made Dobby skip further away. Getting slightly annoyed by this...

'Magie, could you?'

Magie, who was still standing by the door, just walked past Dobby, picking letters from his hand while she did, and walking up to Harry, handed them to him right before vanishing out of view. Harry just smiled at the place she was standing a moment ago and proceeded to look through the stack, consisting mostly of letters from Hermione, but there were some from Neville, and even one from Hagrid and, what looked like a message from Twins if the look of it could say anything. While doing this, he forgot about Dobby, who was looking between his hand and Harry so fast that his ears were flapping around.

"Dobby heard about great Harry Potter sir, but no one before said anything about old ways..."

That got him Harry's full attention again, but before Harry could ask...

"Dobby was wrong. It would be best for Harry Potter sir if he was in Diagon Alley week after Hogwarts letters were delivered." and after that, he vanished with a loud crack.

Harry had no idea what that meant. What it all meant. Later in the evening, after he was done reading the letters, which beside Hermione's, turned out to be birthday wishes, Magie returned with 'Did I miss anything?'. After he told her the rest of the meeting with Dobby, Harry had a question of his own.

'What was that thing with tissues?'

'What do you mean? You wanted the room silenced...'

'Yes I know, but why like that?' asked confused boy.

'I always do it like that, like when you tried that first spell to lift the feather.' responded slightly annoyed Magie.

'Yeah I remember. But, well, I didn't really notice at any other time. You always disappeared in the middle of it.' replied slightly ashamed Harry.

'I got tired really quickly before. But not today. Today it was easier to do.' she said with a shrug.

'So you tell me that it always look like that?' Harry asked in a disbelieving tone with a slight disappointment mixed with it.

'Hey, even if I'm not that normal, I know only common ways of doing things.' snapped Magie, irritated by his response to her efforts.

'Sorry, sorry. I just thought you did something more... magical.' at which she huffed loudly crossing her arms. 'Well, fact that you're so charming still stays the same.' and even if slightly ironic, this compliment somewhat loosened her bringing slight smile to her face.

'So, what are you going to do with what Dobby said?' she finally asked.

'What I can for now. Wait.'

AN. Answering your unasked questions regarding Dursley's. Even thou I read and liked some of abused-Harry stories, I don't perceive Dursley's as horrible people. Misguided is better term for me. Petunia is acting on memories of her sister, and Vernon knows only what his wife told him.

Another chapter will also be out soon, because I already know how it will look like. I just need to write it down.

(Turning on the TV)... And now shocking news from the books corner. J. K. Rowling having the dilemma of giving her rights away, opted against it and still owns Harry Potter... Truly shocking news.

Following days were spent on homework and replying to Hermione's letters, which with time were more and more distressed. Though there was that awkward late-birthday party at which Dursleys, even as they tried, could only wish him best at whatever he wanted to accomplish. Not knowing what he could need in magical world, they bought him set of clothes. And even if it they were modest, at least they fit him. Harry thought that it was more present to them, that they wouldn't want to be seen to often with someone dressed as sloppily as he usually was, but later blamed that initial idea on the new concept of Dursleys being nice to him.

Time progressed in that routine, until the time that Hogwarts letters finally came. Harry had lots of time to think if waiting a week would pay off, but in the end couldn't find anything wrong with the concept, as there was still time to do the shopping after that, and it certainly was better idea than not going back to Hogwarts at all.

So, exactly week later, Harry took a ride with his aunt and uncle, who were also going on a shopping trip to London, so would be able to pick him up on the way back as well. After going through Leaky Cauldron, which was emptier than he remembered it, he went through hidden gate into Diagon Alley, and immediately directed his steps toward Gringotts, where he was to meet with Hermione and her parents.

Going up the steps of the bank, he noticed a goblin in a uniform bowing to him. Remembering now that this happened also at his previous visit, something that he omitted while he was overwhelmed with his first encounter with magical world, Harry stopped and bowed back, before resuming his march. Having his eyes on the door, Harry didn't see that aforementioned goblin was gazing at him, trying to remember face of this particular human.

After a quick look around the inside of the bank, Harry noticed Hermione and her parents in the crowd of red-headed people. A person who, Harry assumed, was Mr. Weasley, while twins were getting a dressing down from, what went without explanation, their mother.

"Hello." he said coming closer to the group, but made it so unfortunately that his greeting scared a small girl standing slightly aside of Mrs. Weasley. Harry couldn't say what surprised her more, his sudden approach, or realisation who it was.

After everyone noticed his arrival, and a round of greetings, everyone moved to finish their business at the bank. When Harry and Weasleys came back from the vaults, he had to say that indeed money wasn't measure of happiness, if that family could be proof to that.

After an hour of checking what kind of shops Diagon Alley had to offer, Harry and Hermione meet with others at Flourish and Blotts, just to notice that Gilderoy Lockhart was about to begin signing of his latest book. Harry had to seriously consider Hermione's explanation about meeting person who wrote so many books, because that squeal sounded just a little bit too girly to be based on a academic interest.

Due to a big crowd, lot of pushing around caused by close proximity of photographer, and a comment made by Ron, Harry somehow found himself right before the camera seconds away from first-page photo. Not at all liking the idea, he had to do something about it... or find certain someone who would help him.

'Magie?' he called while looking around the book-store. Magie on her part made a big show of looking busy with looking through available tomes.

'Magie do you have a minute?' he played along, knowing too well that he couldn't achieve anything if he rushed her act.

'Hmm? Yeah, sure.' she replied, not at all disturbing herself.

'Could you do something about the camera please?' Harry pleaded, looking at the cameramen who was just finishing applying magnesium, or whatever magical folks used instead of it, for the flash.

'Oh, sure.' at which she gave him a "surreptitious" wink, and sneaked "secretly" among people. Finding herself right beside the camera, and after checking if no body have seen her so far, she nonchalantly kicked one of the legs of the tripod, in the effect giving

the cameraman a beautiful shot of the ceiling. Harry had to sigh, roll his eyes, and chuckle at the corresponding parts. Everyone was too busy admiring Gilderoy, and Lockhart himself was too concerned with posing to notice how Harry behaved.

Wanting to somehow save this mishap, Gilderoy made a big announcement of his becoming new DADA teacher at Hogwarts and a show of presenting Harry with his every book, wanting to stall until camera was ready for another picture, but Harry got away before the camera-man could take care of small problems appearing everywhere, which Magie was just too happy to provide.

Remembering empty vault, he walked straight to Ginny and said "You can have these. I'll buy my own." while tipping the stack of books to her cauldron. She blushed beat red, but then...

"Famous Harry Potter. Can't even go into a bookshop without making a commotion." said Draco Malfoy appearing right in front of them, but before Harry could reply...

"Leave him alone, he didn't want all that!" said Ginny.

"Potter, you've got yourself a girlfriend!" drawled Malfoy.

But Harry acted quicker this time and draping his arm around Ginny's shoulders he simply replied "Awfully cute one at that, wouldn't you say?"

That had two effects. Malfoy begun to move his mouth without making any sound, and Ginny's blush deepened so much that Harry thought she might loose consciousness due to all the blood rushing to her head. Just as he removed his hand, and pointed to shocked Ginny state that Draco was in, which brought a smile to her face, Ron appeared to check what it was all about and immediately started arguing with Malfoy.

Maybe it was for the better that Harry no longer participated in the conversation, because he caught sight of Magie just standing there and staring in a way he saw her doing it only once before. Following her gaze, he saw someone who could only be Malfoy's father, observing still growing crowd of redheads while checking something in his pockets. Finally he came closer and, just like Draco did with Ron, immediately started to taunt Mr. Weasley. Observing closely

the confrontation, and gazing from time to time at Magie to check what exactly was she following, he noticed when Mr. Malfoy slipped something with the book that he took out of Ginny's cauldron.

After everyone was finally out of the book-store and making sure that he guessed correctly what caught Magie's attention, he came right next to Ginny.

"Hi. Sorry, but when I was giving you those books, I forgot my... notebook, in there." he said, finally finding a old looking notebook, something he thought wasn't or even shouldn't be there, as wizards still used parchment. Noticing Ginny blushing again, Harry continued with. "Actually, I have to thank you for your part in pranking Malfoy." at which she relaxed, giggling merrily at the memory of Draco's expression.

After coming back home and putting his new books in place, he sat at his desk considering what to do with what turned out as a diary, although so faded out that it could pass as a normal leather-bound work book. Only strange thing about it that he could notice was that beside it worn out state, it was completely empty inside.

'What did you see this time? Again something familiar?' Harry thought to himself, so lost in his thoughts that he didn't even expect to hear...

'Yes, but this time I know from where I know it.'

He lifted his head, to see Magie sitting on his bed, staring at the diary just like he was a moment before.

'Can you tell me about it?'

'I...' she hesitated, but after tearing her gaze from the diary and looking at Harry for a long while 'I think I could show you.'

'How?' he asked at once.

Magie just patted the bed, and after he sat on it, she laid him down and begun to scratch his head, just like she used to. But despite the fact that he felt like falling asleep, and even when he knew the moment that he closed his eyes, Magie didn't fade to black like everything around. She stayed there, just scratching his head.

Suddenly, she stopped and stood up, extending her arm to help him do the same.

"And what was that for?" he asked while sitting up.

"Didn't you notice?" she asked while stepping further away.

At first he didn't know what she was talking about. He was sitting on bed in a room and they were still talking. But then it hit him. It wasn't his bed and it definitely wasn't his room. Even if the room itself was approximately the same size as his, it was very much different. His room was pretty much bare, and when he went to Hogwarts, not counting a few things, it could pass as an empty guest's room. Magie's room on the other hand looked like it was... lived in. You walked into it and thought that you just missed someone who left to get groceries. There were books, personal nicknack's and trinkets, but Harry's attention caught a cork board. Pined to it were things like photographs, but also tickets to cinema or concerts, postcards, and even inside-joke-kind-of-things that only certain people could understand meaning of, like a certain envelope addressed to Harry in a green ink. The whole board just shouted "I was there, I did that... I lived.". Just looking at it brought smile to Harry's face.

"It's so like her. Living to the fullest." thought Harry to himself.

"I'm happy that you like it." responded Magie.

"Why did I say it out loud?" he asked while turning to her.

"What?" she asked, just now finishing watering her plants.

"I thought something, but I spoke it out loud." he said, confused, at which she couldn't stop and laughed.

"What's so funny?" Harry asked while glaring at her.

"Don't you remember where you are? Here your thoughts have an actual form and personalities of their own, so, whatever you think that you think to yourself, here is just speaking." she answered, clearly amused that he really needed to ask.

Harry just stared at her processing what she just told him.

"Yup, welcome to the land where everyone speaks what they think." Magie told him with a big smile.

He just shook his head, not having any response to that.

"Shouldn't we be moving?" Harry proposed.

Magie just nodded, and exiting her room, went through rest of the house and outside, Harry walking right after her.

House itself wasn't too big either, but it shouldn't be a surprise as she said she lived alone. It was placed on a hill overlooking a city in which there was probably everything. Harry could see bell tower of a church, school, hospital, some tall buildings, not really sky scrapers, blocks of flats, houses in the suburbs, and even some lodges in the forest. City itself was on a flatland with some lakes, between a sea and some mountains. Even if there was a lot of things to look at, they still fit perfectly in your field of view, and despite what you thought about distances, it felt like it was close enough for a walk.

When Harry was about to move his feat to go and tour the city, Magie stopped him by grabbing his hand, and pointing the other direction of the small road they were standing on, which was leading into the forest. Looking last time at the city, he followed her.

"I told you when I started putting things in here, that others came, right?" Harry just nodded. "They needed a place to stay, so they built a city for them self. They fit whatever they liked or needed in there, so you can find in theory everything there is, shops, malls, cinemas... Well, everything as long as you know about it." she said with a slight smile. "But here..." she told him, abruptly stopping and pointing at a gap in the hedge that grew along the road. "No one knows, how it got here."

"But if nobody's there..." tried to speculate Harry.

"Oh, I didn't say that no one is there." she answered while vanishing into the gap.

Harry followed her, and after another short walk on a dirt track, they came to a small clearing in the thick forest, where stood a ruined house with a snake nailed to the door.

Magie entered it ahead of Harry, who spent some time to look at the ruin, but while he finally joined her, he notice that she was leaning over a crib. Joining her, he saw something that he didn't expect, in a form of a small child with skin rough and raw, it looked like it had been flayed.

"I think it did it, build this house I mean. We only brought it a crib and some clothing, and check on it from time to time. It used to cry really loudly..." she said while playing with the child, giving it fingers, which it tried to grab. "Those things calm it down, so we hung them here." she said while pointing with her head over the crib. "Earlier they were just lying around the room."

When Harry looked up, he noticed one of those toys you put over child's bed. But this one was most unusual one. Instead of things like animals or air-planes, there were hung things that seemed random. There was a ring, a locket, a cup, a diadem, a miniature snake and a... diary. Child had a line in its hand, probably to make it turn whenever it wanted to. Looking higher, Harry followed the cord that everything was tied with, which lead to a hook, but then down again and into a black canvas that hung in a frame on one of the walls of the hut. Coming closer to it, Harry noticed that it wasn't black canvas, but what looked like magical painting of swirling black smoke. He looked at the toy more closely, and saw that the cord that he thought everything was tied with, didn't make any knots, instead going to objects them self, as well as into the child.

Focusing more on the diary, he noticed that it was in fact the same one that he now had in his room, but looked nothing like it. This one looked brand new. Magie handed him a pen, still having her gift to sense what he wanted to do, and with it he opened the diary on the first page, where in an ink that looked like it just went dry was written "T M. Riddle".

"I think you can touch it. I already did, like several others." said Magie from his side.

Stabbing the diary with his finger without any effect, Harry slowly grasped it, and after he was sure enough that it wasn't dangerous, he opened it at random page and begun to read first line, which turned out to be.

I found it! I finally found IT! Legendary Chamber of Secrets...

AN. I hate you world. I sometimes really do. When I have this great idea about Magie's world, you release film like "Inception". But I got to love you for giving me quick "form" for my unfinished ideas that can't stop bugging me until I get them right.

On a lighter side, did anyone ever think about bringing horcrux into Privet Drive and making Voldemort reborn as Dudley? I'm not saying that I will, but just imagine... I can't even write a one shot on this, I can't stop laughing long enough to write.

Not an actual cliff-hanger-like ending, just wanted to show you that all those things that diary could show to someone who was writing in it, are there in a written form, just like I think the diary looked like before it was made into a horcrux. So, don't think that there will be some recipes for instant power. It's just a diary of a teenager, not a workbook of Dark Lord, where I would keep all my research.

About that thing with Ginny in the bookstore, it was just to annoy Malfoy. Its best way to get back at someone who wants to embaras you, to be bold about it... even if it doesn't exist...

And this kind of text is a quote from the book.

J. K. Rowling called dibs on original series of Harry Potter first, so I'm stuck with this.

The end of the summer vacation was probably the most bizarre thing Harry had ever lived through so far.

After Magie brought him to her "miniature world", he spent as much time as he could to learn how to go there without her help. After he finally could do it right on his own, Harry divided his time between touring the city, relaxing at Magie's and spending time in the run-down hut, trying to understand what it was. Because, if it really was somewhere inside his head, he simply needed to know.

The diary itself wasn't much of a deal, being in essence a journal of a teenage boy who was cursing at the world and pondering his personal dilemmas. Well, yes, it was written in a weird way, like the writer had a paranoia about keeping his secrets to himself, even though he evidently had to write some of them down. But from being where that person evidently had been, Harry could manage to decipher some parts, like clues how to find certain areas in the castle. The diary ended just before something that the writer called "fulfilling his greatest dream". And through it all, Harry didn't know what linked that diary, with this room in his thoughts. Or why in the real world, the diary looked like it was completely blank.

But if you think that touring an non-existent city, and exploring unknown corners of your mind was bizarre part of the vacation, then guess again. The weird part was the part that Harry actually had to live through, and that was the treatment that Dursley's displayed, because it got even stranger than treating Harry good.

Simply told, they started to discipline Dudley.

After some time that they kept their promise to treat Harry as a normal boy, they noticed that he in fact was a quiet, well behaved young man. Clearly not needing to check his every move, they relaxed, only to notice that their own son did how he pleased, no matter what he was told. Of course, as in both Vernon's and Petunia's home's, being spoiled was never an option, such a behaviour could not take place in their own family, and needed to be thwarted as soon as possible.

So, it was decided that Dudley will too share some responsibilities in the house. It was the most ridiculous sight to Harry, Dudley with a mop being told to clean the kitchen. It was borderline with watching a science fiction movie when people had first contact with alien technology, the way he kept looking between the bucket and all the colourful packages of cleaning products, trying to understand how it worked. To top it off, Harry was specifically told NOT to help him, and do only his own chores, as his parents thought, still having their perfect Diddykins in mind, that he was fully capable of handling it himself.

Day's passed by in this bizarre way, until time came that Harry had to go to school. And strangeness followed even then, as when Harry and his uncle arrived at the King's Cross, Vernon asked "Would you mind if I...You know..." Harry looked at him, and quickly caught on, seeing his uncle looking around the station.

"You would like to see the platform?" Harry guessed, at which he received an embarrassed nod.

"Well, you see... Your aunt said she was there once, while your mother was going, but nothing more, so I thought that I could see it for myself." he quickly explained.

Harry just shrugged, and went to the hidden entrance, explaining along the way how to get through it. After his uncle's comment about crazy ideas, Harry just responded that hidden platform spares the people on already busy station, a distraction of a group of strangely looking people with lots pets, and is quite convenient as it doesn't require all those questions of "What is going on?" and "Where are they heading?". That point of view his uncle could quickly accept.

Platform itself was for Vernon quite a let down.

"That's it?" he asked while looking around a normal looking platform, with only change being a steam engine train in a place of a modern one. "A train? No crazy things?"

"Well, we are at a train station aren't we? And as for more "unusual" forms of transportation, I think the train is something of a tradition." at the last one he could see his uncle looking at the steam locomotive again, but this time with near-approving kind of look.

While Vernon was still looking around, Harry was busy scanning the crowd, and as usual Weasley's were late, so only one more distinctive hair colour caught his eyes. Or rather who was standing with the platinum haired family. Because near the Malfoy's, Dobby stood at full attention, probably waiting for the family to conclude their conversation and when he would be given his next orders.

"Uncle, you know that not only people like me tend to be horrible right?" Harry said, interrupting his uncle's inspection of the platform. When Vernon understood what was spoken to him, his ears reddened and he was about to reply, but Harry was quicker. "I didn't mean anything, I just wanted for you to not jump to wrong conclusions when we meet some awful people here." Harry clarified, remembering that Malfoy's always tended to put themselves higher than anyone else.

But luckily, it wasn't Malfoy who spotted Harry, but rather Hermione who just entered the platform with her parents. It was another great thing for Vernon to meet someone in similar situation and listen how they were spooked out at first, before they got used to the situation.

Harry didn't have time to listen to the whole conversation, as He and Hermione had to find a compartment, but it wasn't too hard as the last one was still empty, the same that found Neville's toad exactly year before. Surprisingly, Neville himself joined them as they were loading the trunks, and after the three were on board, there was enough time to go back and say goodbye before a group of red haired people stormed through the platform, the usual signal that it was time to go.

Ride itself was filled with talk about what would this years Defence be like, with Hermione gushing how amazing it will be to learn from a person who accomplished so much, Neville saying that his grandmother thought Lockhart was a phony, and Harry, not wanting to disagree with Hermione at full gear, and crash whatever Neville had to say, speculated that Lockhart took the job to simply sell out the stock of his books.

The only disturbance to this was when Malfoy showed up, looking for some amusement. So when the door slid open, he clearly intoned.

"What have we here. A loser's club." and as if on cue, Crabbe and Goyle begun to snicker.

At that Harry sat up right, and turning to his own companions a look of complete wonder said

"Loser's Club! Hermione, that is so much better than "Group of People No One Really Cares About". Why didn't we think about it before!"

The other two, having already spent some time around Harry, quickly caught on the joke, and trying to keep straight face, and somehow mimic his look of amazement when they followed him to stare at Malfoy like he was eight wonder of the world. Draco on his part was confused what was happening.

"You know, you would be perfect for us. You should join us! All three of you!" Harry said so happily that Hermione and Neville begun to crack up. "With such a great idea's you would soon be chairman or something. You could help us with a campaign to bring other people in, we could have meetings, or better, tea parties! Just imagine how..." but Draco didn't hear any more as he was running as fast as he could to get away from that maniacally-sweet look on Potter's face. In his escape, he missed when the trio begun to laugh uncontrollably, so much that they ended in a heap on the floor.

That bit of amusement kept their mood high all throughout the rest of the ride, the sorting feast, up until they went to sleep in their own four poster beds.

AN. Sorry for short chapter, but don't worry, another is on its way.

Even if I would try to lie, no one would believe me that I'm owner of Harry Potter, so why bother.

Following day thou, amusement wasn't the most common reaction. And not at all when you were a member of the faculty, except for one.

It is said that every blessing can be curse and vice versa. You just needed to find a proper example, and luckily we have just the thing. Gilderoy Lockhart had such a gift, probably perfected through extensive use, that no matter what situation or topic of conversation, he himself was most important person. And like said earlier, it was a blessing and a curse. Blessing for him, curse for entire world.

From the moment he arrived at Hogwart some days before the first of September, Lockhart was a busy person, giving tips to other teachers on best curriculum and schedules, that by the first day of class, every one of them was on edge. Of course, that mood was reflected on the student, who could clearly see that even Professor Sprout was far from her usual cheerful mood. No matter that it was first day, which usually was spent on fast repetition of important information from last year. Teachers were working hard on them from the first minute of class.

Herbology was a real workout, because it was their first time handling plants that had their own ideas about being re-potted. If changing greenhouse was usually this more tiring, Harry now knew why there wasn't physical education in their schedules.

It wasn't much better in Transfiguration, because almost immediately they found them self changing beetles into buttons. But here, he couldn't blame his inexperience with magical plants for his low results. In this class he had to rely on another person.

'Come on Magie, it's your thing. Don't tell me you can't do it.' complained Harry, looking at a flat beetle with holes that was still running around his desk.

'Sorry, I'm just not good at this. I'm better with charms.' replied embarrassed Magie, still remembering how she left whiskers on a snuffbox they had to transfigure mouse into at the practical exam previous year.

'Yes, we all know you're charming.' Harry said with a smile. 'But what if someone helped you with it?' he proposed.

'What do you mean?' she asked, confused.

'I was thinking, maybe the reason why I can do things without wand is because I always think that you do it. Like I would ask anyone else to do something.'

'Any example?' Magie asked, still needing clarification.

'I told you that usually you disappeared in the middle of it, but when things kept flying around, it wasn't hard to just think that you were still juggling them, but being invisible, like wearing that cloak.'

'So, you think I should have someone else do it?' she asked in the end.

'Pretty much.' he answered with a shrug.

After a while Magie thought that it was worth a try.

'Have someone in mind?'

'You know, that guy from the theatre, what was his name?'

'Mr. Danton? Yeah he would be perfect for a magician.' Magie said, and after she closed her eyes and concentrated, another person just appeared in front of them.

This was an older gentleman, dressed in what you call a "white tie", even with a silk scarf and a cane. After a quick explanation of what they wished to accomplish, Mr. Danton, still shaking his head at their strange request, did a big show of getting one of buttons of his coat and vanishing it, after which, he covered now normal looking beetle with his white handkerchief. After one last over-dramatic gesture in which he removed the handkerchief, Harry found an exact replica of one of Mr. Danton's buttons lying on his desk. At the end of the lesson Magie could just grin at him, while Mr. Danton disappeared with an exaggerated bow, yet still having slight smile of his own while he did so.

After quick lunch, Hermione, Harry and Neville went outside to relax as much as they had time to. But then Harry was approached by Colin Creevey, clearly overenthusiastic from his first day of magic, quickly followed with Malfoy, who had to get back at Harry for what happened on the train, clearly forgetting who started that particular exchange.

Of course, Draco's shouting about signed photos brought Lockhart to the place of commotion so fast that Harry didn't have time to end the confrontation, and after Gilderoy took charge of the photos, he started to give his not-yet-as-famous-as-himself hero pointers how to handle those kind of situations. But Harry, with mind already working on a way to make Malfoy go away, saw an opportunity.

"Professor, you should be talking to my manager about such a thing." he interrupted before Lockhart could build up steam.

"A manager?" Defence teacher asked, clearly surprised.

"Yes, Professor. Didn't you see Draco Malfoy making everyone notice the whole thing? You know us Gryffindors, we feel comfortable while in action. I leave business part for the cunning Slytherin."

"Oh, Harry, Harry, Harry. You shouldn't be putting your carrier in others hands, it may..." Lockhart started in his patronizing tone, but again was interrupted.

"No, Professor. I took care of that. We have a pretty tight contract and it goes so far, that if you would ask Draco about anything, he would play confused or absolutely deny everything. That's why you should give him subtle hints in random parts of conversation as he truly didn't know what you were talking about. And preferably on many different occasions so no one overhears everything important. You know those secretive Slytherins"

Lockhart begun to nod his head, taking the whole thing as more and more probable, and after Harry's last comment, he went to search out a true mastermind behind Harry's campaign. Because poster boy wasn't important outside of events where they could be seen together, it was better to influence the person in charge and make sure for those occasions to happen. As a results, Draco Malfoy wouldn't hear the end of Gilderoy Lockhart for months.

But now, everyone mentioned above was busy during a Defence class. Well if you consider being busy writing random answers in the "quiz" Gilderoy prepared for them, like Harry was doing. First he thought about giving a blank sheet, but then it would stand out among other random things people were writing down. As a test itself, Harry felt fully justified as unimportant, because he couldn't fail not knowing Professors personal life when answering a Defence test, just like a chemistry teacher couldn't downgrade you for bad orography. As long as it showed lack of knowledge, it wasn't part that was being graded that you lacked in. And idea of Gilderoy managing straight face while calling it an actual test after someone showed it to another teacher was just absurd.

In the end, Gilderoy didn't even read most of it, just skimming over in search of right answers. Of course, Hermione had all the answers right, but when her name was called out, her blush was too evident for Harry to miss.

But that thought was quickly replaced with bunch of pixies trashing the classroom. While everyone went into a panic fit, Harry sat in his seat and observed, until Gilderoy lost his wand, at which he thought that it was high point to do something. And he did couple of paper air planes.

'Magie, could you do the honours?' he asked, and didn't have to wait long to see her sitting next to him with a pilot hat on her head and a controller in her hands.

While Harry did his usual act of actually casting the spells, Magie switched the controller on and sent air planes into the air one after the other, doing the whole "You have clearance for lift-off" along the way. Quickly, all the pixies in the room were zooming after pieces of paper in the air, with a single thought of destroying them. It was just their bad luck that with their tunnel vision they didn't notice direction that every plane was heading, because while paper could just fold itself to pass through bars of the cage, pixies ended sprawled against them, while Magie just locked them inside.

Everyone just stood gaping at Harry still sitting at his desk, and even when the bell rung they couldn't move from their place. Harry just gathered his things and went on his way, but was soon joined by Hermione and Neville.

"What? How?..." Hermione kept stammering, not really sure what she wanted to ask. "Why did that work?" she managed in the end.

"Well, as far as I know animals are aggressive only when they feel threatened or when they are hunting. Seeing as they went after everything that moved I would have to say that those pixies are on the predatory side of the scale..."

"Went after everything that moved? They were throwing our things out of the window!" Neville nearly shouted, still shaken by the experience.

"Yes, after you hid under the desk, so I guess they started grabbing things with your scent on it, or just anything near enough the last place they saw you." he said showing them his own bag with everything intact. "But as I was saying, since they would chase after whatever moved, I just gave them something to run after." he said like it was most normal thing in the world.

"But there wasn't anything like this in our Defence books." complained Hermione.

"Just like there wasn't how to make a paper air plane, but there are some few chosen who know that forgotten art." Harry replied in a voice of a master scolding his young apprentice, which made Hermione scowl. "What I'm trying to say is you can't rely only on books."

"How can you say that!" Hermione shouted stopping abruptly.

"Ok, then answer me this. If everything that have writing on it would be burnt or otherwise destroyed, but people kept going, what would they do?" Harry asked.

"They would rewrite the books." immediately answered Hermione.

"Right, but what with the parts that no one would remember? Because you can't expect that every book or piece of information is remembered word by word. What with the missing part?"

"It can be rediscovered." she said with dawning realisation.

"Right. Because as long as people have head on their shoulders, you can destroy knowledge as much as you want, and they'll just start from the start. But if people somehow lost their intelligence, no amount of information would do any good, because they wouldn't understand what they were reading, or just couldn't make simple connections between basic facts. So, even if someone wrote many books, you shouldn't follow him if he doesn't put any thought in his action. Even if he's good looking." Harry added teasingly.

Hermione just nodded, chastised and slightly embarrassed at her initial response.

AN. I forgot to write this before, but Snape is still teaching. Dumbledore needs him, and besides Lucius is on the board, so he got out of it. Besides, how can I annoy him if he isn't there for me to annoy him.

I just have to write this. People gush over what illusionists do now, but the most perfect magic trick I ever saw was a black and white movie of a older man as I described him above, smoking a cigar (I think) and juggling single white ball. He would just walk around the stage puffing smoke and throwing the ball into one cloud, just to grab it from another. I saw it only once, but if anyone know where I can see this movie or live act again, I beg you to tell me.

About Hermione. I had teacher once that if you left her with a complex problem that no one could solve and sufficient amount of time, she would come with an answer. But at the same time was impossible to live with, since she had to spend some time thinking about EVERYTHING before she gave you an answer. Hermione reminds me of her in a way, because she can be smartest witch of her age, and still be useless at times, like when they were heading for the stone and she started shouting that there weren't any wood to make fire. Hermione just needs some time and peace to think things through.

I looked through my copies of Harry Potter series, and I couldn't find my name anywhere. Instead, owner was named as J. K. Rowling. If you don't believe me, check for yourself.

Following days brought only more of workload and frustration to the students of Hogwart, accompanied with rain that poured from stormy clouds which appeared out of nowhere and decided to stay.

First day of clear sky happened to be a Saturday, and Harry could enjoy this revelation from crack of dawn, because that was when Oliver Wood woke him up. While gathering his gear, Harry had to wonder if Wood didn't come from a family closely connected to the post-mail, because "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night" could stop Oliver Wood from scheduling a Quidditch practice.

Another funny thing was picture that Colin, who seemed to have a alarm or radar kind of thing when it came to Harry, developed, the one Lockhart dragged Harry into. On it, animated Gilderoy tried to do a striking pose, just to be interrupted by Harry who was sneaking around, scaring Lockhart by obviously shouting right behind his back, messing his hair at another time, even making Lockhart fall at one point, when he was doing his pompous walk around the picture and Harry gave him the leg.

Harry had to wonder if that kind of picture caught your magic, because that was exactly what Magie would do if she were playful, or just what you intend to do at that moment, Lockhart wanting to look good, and Harry considering a good prank at that moment.

It was good that he managed to get in good mood, because state that field was in after a week of rain, and a speech from Wood about how this years training would be so much effective, which everyone quickly understood as harder, swept any humour from everybody's mind.

But after so inspiring presentation given by their captain, they couldn't start the practical part, because of the Slytherin team warming up on the muddy field.

"What are you doing here?" Wood snapped at them, thus making people in the stands, who came to enjoy a nice day in only place on

school grounds that was at least partly dry, to notice encounter in the field.

"We need to train our new seeker." replied Flint, Slytherin captain, showing them the note from Snape.

When Malfoy stepped in front of his team, he quickly started his show of taunting anybody in front of him. Harry just barely listened to him, thinking about brand new brooms that every member of Slytherin team was holding.

As the commotion in the field grew, so did crowd in the stands as people caught wind that something interesting was happening. Neville and Hermione also came, and they brought Harry something to eat after they heard that Gryffindor team was long gone before breakfast started.

Two new people on the field quickly caught Malfoy's attention,

"Oh, Gryffindor called for help and their best came." Draco said, making everyone else notice the two that stood near Harry. "And you," he added looking straight at Hermione "This field is already a mess, we don't need additional Mu..."

"What about a match?" Harry interrupted him, while munching on a toast, returning conversation to the original argument, and sparing Hermione whatever insult Malfoy intended to use at the same time.

"What?" both teams asked simultaneously.

"Well, our team booked the field, yours have that note allowing you to use it as well. We need to practice, your seeker need the experience. Why not play a game?"

Slytherin's were grinning at each other, always thinking that opportunity to embarrass Gryffindor couldn't be too good to pass. Gryffindor's on the other hand stared strangely at Harry. Even Wood had his doubts.

"Harry what are you doing?" he asked after dragging Harry away.

"They were bragging that our team is ridding old brooms. What Slytherin's had before?"

"Something similar, maybe a class better. Why?" Oliver asked, not understanding why it was relevant.

"You remember training when I rode my Nimbus for the first time? They're riding brand new brooms, so..." Harry left his sentence hanging, and by the glint in Wood's eye, he knew that Oliver caught on.

After a quick talk with everybody else, Gryffindors thought that a quick game would be good for them, and they would indeed enjoy it. When everyone got in position, Slytherins were barely able to constrain themselves from rubbing hands in glee from the absence of any type of referee. They could foul all they wanted and there would be no penalty.

But cunning Slytherins didn't notice that Gryffindors wanted them to play all out from the start.

In sport practice was most important, because it allowed you to master your skills, to know for sure that when you performed, your moves would be perfect every single time. But sports where you ride a car, motorbike, or in this case, a broom, wasn't all about a person. Interaction between man and machine was important if one wanted to reach his limits, and knowing if it was built to make that particular corner at top speed, or even if it slightly banked in one direction, could be the difference between winning or losing. Knowing your gear and being sure you can rely on it was first thing.

So, when game started, Slytherins looked like bunch of people who tried to drive a car for the first time. First they tried to knock Gryffindor team from the sky, shooting at them at top speed. Speed far greater than that of their old brooms. Of course, they overshoot by a mile players who just ducked under them. Then, for the longest time they would shoot straight out just to come to a screeching halt. Whatever skills they had were useless as they tried to control their brooms to which they weren't adjusted.

During this time, Gryffindors just played their game, getting in to a rhythm well known from practice and many games. Players tuned with themselves and their old battered brooms.

When Slytherins got hand of their brooms and returned to active play, they were so far behind that even catching the snitch wouldn't help them. As we are talking about snitch...

"You're completely crazy to challenge our team now, Scarhead." begun Malfoy when they both got to position on the field, far higher than other players. He wanted to taunt Potter as much as he could before humiliating him with catching the snitch. He just had to vent some frustration from Lockhart stalking him all week first.

"You Gryffindors are always so..." Draco continued to talk to Harry who was busy with... chasing butterflies?

"What the hell are you...?" asked confused Malfoy, just to see Harry noticing something down below, just to shoot straight for the earth. Draco followed his gaze, and noticed a glint of gold.

Bringing his superior broom to full speed, Slytherin boy quickly caught to the Gryffindor seeker, overtook him, and just now noticing how close earth was, had enough time to slow down, before crashing into the muddy field.

Clearing his eyes from the sticky substance, he could see Potter standing nearby, searching something on the ground. Finally he bent down and picked a single galleon.

"It dropped out of my pocket, but you didn't have to help me. I could have picked it up on my own, thanks." Harry said clearing the coin and putting it in his pocket.

Funny thing was, Harry managed to pull the same trick once more, getting Malfoy even dirtier.

On the third time that he shot for the ground, Malfoy started to shout "It won't work any more..." just to see Potter stop among other players and show them golden ball held tightly in his hand.

In the aftermath, score was ridiculous to even mention. Slytherin team all banged up from continuous onslaught of bludgers from Weasley twins. But the worst case was Draco, covered in mud from head to toe.

"You might want to wash thoroughly, I bet you have some inside." was Harry's comment at the sight that was Draco Malfoy, and it made everyone stop and grow quiet. "What?" he asked, noticing strange looks most people were giving him. "I meant for his ears." he said pointing at Malfoy who tried to make a single sentence of the situation, clearly not hearing a word, and with one eye still covered in mud. Gryffindors burst out laughing, and Slytherins made a quick retreat, having enough humiliation for the day.

"Great one Harry! Nearly saying that Malfoy was a mudblood." said Weasley twins as they intercepted him on the way to the castle.

"What's a mudblood?" asked Harry, not knowing what meaning wizards saw in this word.

"You know, dirty blood. Someone who isn't from old family of wizards. It's worst thing you could call a muggle-born." they said with frowns on their usually joyful faces.

Harry just snorted. "That's it?"

Twins blinked in surprise.

"Just think about it. What it states is because someone is from different family, of different blood, different culture, if he acts differently, it makes him worse. That's it. It's basic belief that ours is best, different is always worse. But all people are different. Even if they're from the same community they differ, even so slightly. You first look at what one does, before calling it better, not call dibs on best, and then make everyone do exactly what you do. And if you tell me that not being called mudblood means I would have to look and act like Malfoy, I'm starting to pray right now for someone to call me that everyday."

It took Twins a while to look at it from a new perspective, but that last picture of a school full of Malfoy-look-alikes, everyone flanked with two goons and stating their superiority to... them self, since you couldn't guess who was who, made a truly comic sight... or maybe a good prank idea...

AN. Sorry for not-so-often updates, but I have another story idea, and since I don't want to write two stories at once, I'm just writing

ideas down for both. I'll keep this in mind, and post the other only when some scenes will put them self together.

Another chapter should be out shortly.

This is fan-fiction site. I'm a fan and this is a fiction. Go read J. K. Rowling's books if you want the original story.

As fun, thou tiring, Harry's time at Hogwart was this far, he really had some things to do, and places to be, both of which didn't have anything to do with school-work. Considering that he did his homework as soon as he could to have more time for his self-study, and by now it was mostly done, at Sunday he went to a toilet who everyone else in the castle tried to avoid as hard as they could. But the ghost responsible for that was absent from its usual spot, probably to participate in spreading the result of unofficial match the day before which by now probably everyone knew about. Harry used it as his cover story for disappearing for a whole day, saying that he didn't want any part in the rumours, especially as he was the one they were about.

Finding the entrance mentioned in the diary was ridiculously easy when you knew where to look. Opening it with Slytherins gift, was trickier, but not impossible like guessing what kind of gift was it, object or whatnot. Luckily Harry was sparred investigating when he grabbed first book about the founders from the shelf of Hogwarts library. But it was still a bit tricky to speak in parseltongue, until Harry remembered his talk with the snake in the muggle zoo. The trick was to not to force it, or even think too much about it. You just spoke to the snake, magic did the rest.

When he went down the tunnel that was continuation of the pipe that brought him deep underground, he had to stop near the gigantic shedding and think something along the lines 'No! An enormous snake as a monster in Slytherins chamber that that book mentioned. How... unexpected...' he added with a chuckle. But it quickly died down, as he thought that there was a chance it might attack him. He just had to believe that Slytherins gift would take care of it as well.

But the chamber itself was deserted, as he noticed after getting through the last barrier. Nothing more and nothing less than eyes of stone serpents watching his every move as he walked around the chamber. At the end of it, there was additional pair of eyes gazing at him, this time belonging to the only human statue. But beside that imitation of life? Nothing. Just stones and damp, chilly air accompanied Harry. Until...

'Magie?' he asked noticing a single figure standing couple of feet away, just staring at blank piece of wall.

'Come here.' she simply said.

Getting closer to her, Harry still couldn't understand what she found so interesting in this particular place. To him all the stones looked the same, no matter in which direction of the wall he looked.

'What is it?' he asked again.

'I... don't know.' she answered, and looked at him, tearing her gaze away from the wall for the first time. Suddenly she grabbed his glasses from his nose, and started to clean them with a clean piece of cloth. After she thought they were clean enough she handed them back.

Harry didn't even bother asking what she did, just put his glasses back on, and indeed there was a difference. Before, you couldn't tell one rock from the other one in any place of the chamber. But now, couple of rocks in this particular place looked different, more transparent. It was like instead of rock, someone put slabs of rough glass in couple of places, with a faint glow right behind them.

Not a glow, Harry corrected his observation, but rather a source of light that changed its position on the other side of the wall, he thought as he observed how there was always a stone brighter than the others, flashing in some kind of a pattern.

Harry took off his glasses and looked at again normal wall. He reached and ran his hand over the wall, feeling only stone under his fingers. But when he put the glasses back on, the light didn't travel any more, instead shining brighter in the spot he touched the transparent stone at the time that the light came to it while following its pattern. It wasn't long though, before light dimmed to its earlier glow and resumed its travel.

Harry looked at Magie, who just shrugged, meaning that she too didn't know what else could be done. So, he touched the light, and without waiting, begun pressing next stones, following the pattern. When the last stone was touched and increased in its glow, just like it happened in Diagon Alley when you tapped correct bricks, stones

tarted to move and stopped only when there was a doorway leading to a room.

'Chamber of Secrets. No wonder there is more than one secret in here...' Harry thought as he stepped into new room.

But even if there was more things than in the larger chamber, there still wasn't much to look at. In the middle of the room stood a table with a chair on either side, and nothing more. But it was what was on the table that caught Harry's attention, because there was a piece of parchment lying on the table held by what Harry assumed was another of those transparent rocks, not being sure because whatever Magie did to his glasses stopped working right after he stepped through the new-found opening.

Picking the parchment from underneath the rock, he saw a flowing handwriting, looking in places like a snake trails instead of something done by a quill. Just like the room, note on the parchment wasn't much.

Even thou it pains me to do so, I must leave the castle, part with my friends, and live a life of solitude. If it just wasn't for the history trying to repeat itself. I wish from all my heart that it won't be so, but if it will, I hope that this note will still be here, waiting... "Waiting for someone like you."

Did you ever consider reading? Hearing that voice in your head repeating words exactly as they were on the paper. It is your voice, but is it? Do you remember when you last read a part said by a character of opposite sex, and that voice changing itself to belong to that character?. It is still your voice, or is it? When its changed to be someone's not even slightly resembling you.

Harry didn't have time to pursue everything that simple observation could mean. He was trying to understand how he could have heard that last line, in that voice which should be his but wasn't, when the words weren't written on the parchment he was holding in his hand.

After staring at the parchment for the longest while, he lifted his head, remembering that there was a world beside that note, and just now noticed another person sitting in the other chair across the table. And that someone wasn't Magie.

It was a man dressed in green robes with accents of silver, with the same kind of monkeyish face that Harry saw on the statue in the main chamber, but far younger. His beard wasn't so long and his hair had healthy brown colour, though you could find couple strands of grey here and there.

"Hello. I'm happy you finally joined me." said the stranger with slight smile.

"Erm... Hi." Harry responded awkwardly, gazing Magie's direction who nodded. "You, aren't... alive. Right?"

"Very good. I'm something more than a bunch of memories, but not someone who was Salazar Slytherin. I'm here to talk to you a bit, before making a choice." the phantom said.

"Talk about what?" Harry asked not-so-intelligently, still slightly disturbed that he didn't know what was happening.

"We should start from what you know about history of magic."

"Well... not much. I'm only a second year, and we learn only about goblin rebellions on History of Magic. Being muggle raised don't help much." Harry mumbled under his breath, but the phantom still caught it. "Oh, there was a sign on Ollivander's wand shop saying that they sold wands since 328 B. C. Or was it 382? That counts doesn't it?" Harry added seeing how the phantom was acting.

At the first part, he was shaking his head, getting confused look when Harry mentioned goblin rebellions. But when he said the last part, happened something Harry didn't expect. The phantom burst out laughing. Harry now could see where the "something more than bunch of memories" part was.

"Wands! From 382 B. C.! Oh, that's rich." the older man said, still getting a chuckle from his earlier howling-with-laughter fit. "Wait." he stopped when he noticed the strange look Harry was giving him. "You're not joking about the sign?" No reply was all the reply he needed. The phantom heaved a deep sigh, with a pained look on his face.

"Sorry, but are you sure you are... were, Salazar Slytherin? No offence but you don't act Slytherin-like." said Harry who couldn't keep that from bugging him.

That brought a smile to the older man's face again. "And how would a proper Slytherin act?"

Harry told him about a couple of observations about that house, bringing encounters with Malfoy as at least some examples. The older man just sat and listened, with a sad smile on his face.

"So it did turn the way I thought it would." commented the phantom when Harry didn't have anything more to add. "Well since you don't know much, I at least don't have to argue many things you would strongly believe in. But where to start." he said with a frown. "If you don't know History of Magic, do you know muggle myths, legends and such?" Harry just nodded. "You must have heard about Merlin." Another nod. "Good, it will simplify things." phantom said to himself.

"So, as you said you know it, tell me how Merlin did magic?"

"Well, he carried staff." answered Harry.

"And before?" was phantom's next question, which confused Harry.

"What do you mean before?"

"At what age do you see Merlin, if you had to describe him?" phantom asked.

"Well, a really old person, with long white beard and everything." Harry answered, feeling stupid, like he was missing something obvious.

"So you have a old person, carrying a staff. He was an advisor to the king, Arthur's mentor. Wouldn't king be able to afford a cane for his old friend to help him walk in his old days? Maybe some fancy walking stick, with carvings or even some jewels to show his status?" asked older man , giving him a questioning look.

'Well, that's how a proper staff look, doesn't it?' Harry thought, at which he heard a snort.

Looking to the source of the noise, he noticed Magie leaning against one of the walls, smirking at him like was a complete moron, that he now knew he was.

"You mean, Merlin didn't need anything to do magic?" Harry asked, turning back to the phantom, and receiving a nod in return.

"Nor did his apprentices, or theirs. Or anyone at that time that I know of. That's how the four of us came up with an idea of a place where people could gather and learn from one another. Before that, if you didn't have enough luck to meet a skilled wizard, only thing was to self study by trying different things and a lot of time. I was lucky enough to meet one crossing fen where my family used to live..."

"Wait, weren't you from long line of wizards?" Harry had to interrupt.

"No. Godric and Rowena were from a line of nobles, just hear how their names sound. But still, it wasn't line of wizards. It was good that they weren't main heirs, since that would spoil their plans to pursue magical study. As for me and Helga, we were commoners. But that was the point at that time. No matter who you were, or where you came from, as long as you had this gift and followed couple simple rules, you were welcomed. This castle was raised mostly by people working together to learn what could be done with magic, and if it failed, trying something else. Before that, wizards were mostly hermits, living alone to learn as much they could without any interruptions. Ah, yes. How do you communicate with your magic?" asked the phantom.

"I talk to her." answered Harry looking at Magie, who showed him her tongue, still acting like she was angry at him for forgetting that magic without wands was possible.

Phantom blinked in surprise. "Like with a person?"

"Yes, she's a person, what else should she be?"

The older man thought hard for a while, clearly trying to use whatever thinking process he had to tie some memories together and figure something out.

"Could you ask her to touch this stone?" the phantom asked after some time in silence.

'Magie, could you?' Harry asked, at which she just huffed with her nose in the air.

'Pretty please.' he added, giving her his best puppy eyes, at which she cracked a smile, and while walking to the table, hit him on the back of his head. Harry scowled a bit, but couldn't help a smile of his own.

All the while, the phantom was watching how Harry acted, since he could only see this part of the confrontation.

But when Magie touched the stone, there was a feeling like a electric charge passed over everyone, and in addition, mirage of Salazar begun blinking rapidly, like he was hit by a bright flash. When his view cleared from stars, he could now see a young girl standing near him.

"I think you can remove your hand now, dear. Since I'm familiar with you, I think I'll be able to see you." he said, and after Magie stepped away from the stone, Salazar nodded that he could still see her. "I'm sorry for that burst of energy, but it was from two forces colliding. You should really learn how to blend in better, young lady."

"Blend in? And what's with this stone? And besides, you didn't told me why it was weird to talk with your magic like she was a person." Harry asked, having many more questions about what happened in last couple of minutes.

"Ah, yes. I'll start with the last, since you'll need it to understand the first two. Did you ever heard about people throwing bones or something similar like runes, other hearing wind whisper, or even someone saying that something would happen because it just looked like it?" Harry just nodded, not wanting to interrupt. "Those were most probably wizards. Whenever you heard a story about someone speaking with the spirits, ghost, any kind of the "unseen" it was most definitely one. Wizards were famous for they knew more than what could be seen by naked eye. Take for instance our four. Helga would watch the earth, since she worked on a farm from early years. Her favourite way was to throw stones. Rowena would follow the air, she said that from youngest years would throw small things out of the window of her tower in her family castle, and watch those bits dance on the wind. I watched the fire, keeping it alive in the

damp moor. I made stories sitting by the flame, but once I understood that the fire was telling me stories instead. As for the bold Gryffindor, that golden boy couldn't go anywhere without a shine in his steps. That was usual joke, but as for an action loving person, he sometimes was just too calm. He would sit near the water and just watch light dance across the surface." shade of Salazar Slytherin told, with a faraway look, reliving memories of better times.

"You said you were on second year." phantom continued returning to here and now. "That's another thing that was different. Finding and understanding your own way of magic was a very personal thing. That's why you became an apprentice until such a time that you were capable on learning on your own. Of course, at Hogwarts you could have more than one mentor, but the fact remained that there was only one person who helped you discover how to communicate with magic."

"That's another , and probably most important thing that made us have this conversation. Wand-less magic is about understanding. See yourself as part of a greater thing, doing something to accomplish what you wanted, but in such a way as not to disturb more than you needed. That's why you needed to blend in with what was around you, and act with it, not against it. That's also why with different ways of "seeing" magic, everyone could do the same thing happen. Because, be it fire, smoke, dust or anything else, it was just another part of the same complex process. You just needed to understand how it worked together, and you could accomplish anything you wanted."

"We all emulated Merlin. He was a great man, and a great wizard. But some thought, just like you did, that his powers came from his staff, when really he had so much experience at that point that he probably didn't even had to concentrate to see magic at work, instead feeling it with his whole body and his every sense. It still didn't stop people from trying to construct magical staffs. In time, they succeed, and then made smaller and more portable ones, ending with wands. At the time I decided to leave, wands were pretty new, and since way of channelling magic changed, so did a way you needed to do your magic. It was evident with staffs that energy didn't come out of your whole body, instead concentrating on points where it could be used. Wands only made it worse."

"When someone cast a spell with one of those, it felt like you were standing next to a cannon as it was fired. So much force unleashed and charging through the surrounding area, disrupting everything around. But that wasn't worst thing. People were. It was progressing faster in muggle world, what with kingdoms wanting to take control over everything close enough to reach. And that was what wand magic was consisted of. No understanding, no contemplating. Just control. Man with power to control everything around and bend it to his will. They say power corrupts..." the phantom said, only now stopping in his tale.

Harry and Magie sat there stunned, not caring how much time went by, being drawn so much that nothing else mattered. It had even greater effect, because this wasn't just a tale. It explained their situation, making it feel like they were there them self.

"That's why I had to leave. The others said it wouldn't be so bad, bud I just couldn't shake this feeling, this chill creeping down my spine even as I was sitting by my fire. I just couldn't take any part in teaching or helping convert wand-less magic to one done by wands. It just didn't feel right." the older man said, evidently wrapping up his story.

"Eee..." Harry begun trying to reboot his thinking process over the information that was thrown on him. "You didn't explain the stone." he said, pointing to the rock that the parchment was pressed with.

"Oh, right. It was just before I left that we thought of a way to find out which kind of magic it would be best for them to start with. By that time, castle was complete and we were Grandmasters, with a few apprentices at Master level each, but we still had our main fields of interest. Helga taught everything useful, anything that you could use for work. I think they named this charms. Rowena was into research mostly, trying out new things all the time. It would be spell creation or something like that now. Gryffindor used to learn everything useful in battle, but due to his interaction with water he was natural at transfiguration. As for me, I learned everything that helped to survive. Plants, animals, potions of course, but also some mind magic to fool anyone that tracked me, or even reading minds. I think that's how I learned to talk to snakes, they would often come to warmth near the fire. Understanding animals is quite easy, but talking outright is something different."

"But back to the topic. We needed a way to check what you were most capable at, so we just gave a little of ourself into Godric's hat. I did the same to this stone. Anyone who didn't know how to do wandless magic wouldn't notice me. Just like no one could open the door in the first place. They could have cast their spells all they wanted, but because of the power from their own spells it would just come up as a blank piece of wall." he finished with a snort.

"You mean there wasn't sorting into different houses or anything?" asked perplexed Harry.

"And why would you need that? I mean yes, people wanting to go deeper into one subject were closer with one master, but if you wanted to learn anything at all, you just asked person more experienced in it to give you pointers."

"And Slytherin's weren't suspicious of one another?"

"No. I mean, there was ambition and strive to be better than everyone else. To come better off after a week at a school, it was quite a thing. But it was healthy competition. And besides, how could you prove that you had better skills than anybody else, if you were all alone all the time? My pupils were always together, wanting to top the best in the group. It was good for them. It made them want to do better at every opportunity."

"As we are talking about pupils, I made my choice." the phantom finally announced. "You will be my heir."

"A what?" asked Harry, not knowing if he heard correctly.

"I'm going to make you my heir. It is in my power."

"And what would that require of me to do?"

"Very good answer." said the older man with a smile on his face.

"What answer?" asked confused Harry.

"Many would think that being a heir would consist of wealth, fortune and titles. But it wasn't always like that, and especially not when it came to wizards. Being a heir meant first and foremost to keep the tradition and strive to be a better king, noble, or when it came to

wizards, teacher and mentor that the one you had, even if your predecessor was considered a living legend. It didn't matter, you were meant to ensure that ways that were passed down to you weren't forgotten."

"Now I understand from where pure-bloods took their fanatic belief in ancestry, though they twisted original belief in following the tradition." Harry commented, seeing how proud Slytherin was while talking about it.

"That's why you should stop all this rubbish with teaching about goblin rebellions instead of telling what really happened. And no more wands from 382 B. C." Salazar said with a chuckle.

"But..." hesitated Harry. "I don't know anything about that. Magie does all the magic, and how am I to know history when it isn't taught properly?"

"For the first, I might have an idea how to help this lovely lady be even better at what she does. I might not know much more beside what I've told you, but I'm still cunning enough to work past that. But first I would need to enter your mind somehow, maybe some mind trick would work..."

"That shouldn't be a problem." said Magie, speaking up for the first time.

After checking that she could touch the phantom without the previous effect, she dug in her pockets and after finding some chalk, she drew a door on the wall. Amazement on the face of Salazar was priceless when after pushing at the door-wall, stones gave way to reveal a sight of the city Harry was by now too familiar with. Magie took the phantom inside, and after the door closed after them, they just reappeared at places they were the moment earlier.

"Young man, that mind of yours is another thing I don't remember seeing ever before."

"So, what do we do about the history part?" asked Harry.

"You might want to talk to someone else about that. It will be your first lesson at understanding. Talk with the statue in the main

chamber, but remember to be respectful to her." was phantoms last advice before he and Magie vanished.

Harry had to smile. She was so excited when she could do just one more thing before getting tired. Today was definitely exhausting for her, but it seemed it didn't end for him yet.

Stepping back into the main chamber, Harry regarded the tall statue. Why did Salazar say to be respectful to her? He was deep underground, with stones around him and nothing more. And only human shaped statue was a male. Wait. Didn't he said something about people hearing wind speak?

"Mother Earth, whisper me a tale." Harry said, feeling stupid, but having no other ideas, and thinking it wouldn't hurt to try.

Remembering to be respectful, he bowed to the ground. He stood like that, keeping his eyes to the ground, even as something massive landed nearby and begun to slither around him. Harry quickly recognized snake that left the enormous shedding.

"Mother earth. You're just like him. You even have the same feel about you." hissed the giant snake. "It just too bad that you didn't come before the other came. Lies and tricks, what have happened to wizards to be like that... Younglings told me the truth about that one. But you... You are just like him. I can sense it even after nearly a thousand years. Mother Earth..." was added with a snake-laugh.

All this time, the snake was slithering and moving around him, that by the time it stopped, Harry was lying quite comfortably on top of its coils.

"Speak young heir, what tale should your Old Mother tell..."

It was quite different experience than a boring ghost, having a thousand year old basilisk telling you about the past.

AN. You might have noticed that I tend to write mile long sentences. It's just hard for me to stop at times, since to me this is one continuous thought. You'll just have to get used to it.

Another thing is that I don't really know a lot about many subjects, and what I know, I just twist so it fits situation I'm actually thinking

about. If you see any error, tell me about it, I'll think, edit, explain, or just say that I don't care having something else on my mind...

This chapter longer, since I wrote something of my own, instead adding comments to the book.

I read a lot of fics where Harry is so special that he do magic like no one before, sometimes even breaking well known rules of magic. I thought screw that, lets make it so he is the one doing it right.

As said earlier, phantom of Salazar Slytherin isn't Salazar himself, so no instant power-ups. He's just another "advisor" Harry have in his head. And no. That rock wasn't horcrux or anything. Just set of memories like Snape gave Harry in the last book combined with how Sorting Hat works, as it can think for itself.

Basilisk can be a nice pet too. Since Salazar had it as familiar, it can be done. The basilisk rampaging throughout the school hissing so loudly you can hear it through walls isn't a hunter. It's a pissed off snake saying "Get out of my way, or die." I can imagine young Riddle sweat talking how people were spoiling Salazar's work, if you want my explanation at how it worked the first time around.

As I'm in a bit of rambling fit, I don't really know what else should be explained here. If you need to know, just ask about it. I need to sleep this one out now, since it's 7:20am now and I haven't slept all nig...zzzZZZ

I threw my copies of Harry Potter series out when I noticed that it's easier to write what you want to say instead concentrating on twisting someone's work. If you want them, they should be still lying somewhere under my window. Just look for Harry Potter by J. K. Rowling.

From that day, Harry still continued his visits to library, but not to dig through every book in search of answers. It was more to make sure people still knew he was around, even if it was only Hermione and Neville, and to find snippets of information that were lost from memories of his new mentors. Rest of the time he spent under tutelage of inhabitants of Chamber of Secrets. He still attended his classes, not to learn spells, as he could be waving his wand all day without any results, but to listen to the theory of what the spell did, and give Magie place to practice without anyone suspecting anything.

Salazar's word about being in power of making Harry his heir didn't consider any rituals or even anything like lightning coming out of the clear sky to announce it. What Slytherin did, was talk. He talked with Harry about being a wizard, nothing more. It was good enough that they could do this in private, while sitting by the fire near Salazar's new house on a fen near the City. Thou, talking was a bit too much for it.

Slytherin would give Harry an unique kind of homework. He would name one topic, or ask a single question, and give Harry time to think about it. Then he wouldn't ask what he made of it, but rather how it was connected with a topic that didn't seem connected in any way, or how you could bring something to a place that normally it would never find itself in. Riddles like "Why no one would pay any attention to a elephant in a porcelain shop?" or "How could you jump higher than a three story building, while not having any miraculous powers?" to name a few. If you're wondering about it now, then it isn't so surprising to see a porcelain elephant. As for the second one, buildings simply don't jump, so jumping higher isn't a problem.

You could name it as just another kind of word game, or just a big waste of time considering events that couldn't even happen. But what it was, was a show of possibilities. With every answer Harry understood more and more, that nothing is really set in stone, and even if it is, there are many different angles you could consider it from. Playing with language was just easiest way of juggling ideas.

Everyone heard that a picture is worth a thousand words, but that's just because it lets you know what someone meant faster, without all the trouble of having to talk about it to you. Words, pictures, or anything else. They don't matter. What does is idea standing behind them. If you don't believe me, then take a book written in a language you don't know. It surely is filled with words, but what good it does to you when you don't know their meaning. On the other hand, if you would listen to a sad song without lyrics, then no matter where it comes from, you still can feel sadness flowing out of the notes. Without knowing the feeling, being sad is just a meaningless expression. Understanding someone isn't about knowing what words he spoke, but catching that fleeting idea that he is trying to share.

That's what Harry was learning. By breaking down language barriers and playing with words, he was ridding himself from walls put between concepts. Because really, who of you would think that word "deliver" could mean someone's liver.

But as strange that kind of thinking would be considered, it didn't make him act any more strange. In fact Salazar stressed that being a mage wasn't about acting anything different. Truth be told, if a wandless magic user did everything right, no one would notice a thing until it was pointed to them.

That kind of acting explained why modern wizards needed International Statute of Wizarding Secrecy, as wand magic could be spotted from a mile away with all the suspicious hands movement, and not to forget, all the lights coming with it. The thing with wizards knowing less than nothing about muggles wasn't helping.

Modern look on wandless magic was that it wasn't possible, and the few that had the gift for it could do only small things. It went on and on how unprecise it was because you had to waste too much energy to do something major. Salazar could only laugh when Harry told him about the things written in those books. As he later explained, it was the other way around.

To put it into a picture, lets say you are in a long journey and immensely bored at this point, so you look for some form of entertainment. Something to read perhaps.

Using wand magic would be like beating the driver into submission so he would change the course and take you to a library, then doing the same thing with the librarian so she would give you a book you would like to read without any paperwork. Immensely time consuming and tiring course of action. Someone who was using wandless magic would just look around and ask person nearby if he could borrow newspaper, or just couple of pages that person had already read through.

Most surprising part of this metaphor is the driver, because it represents the body. That warm feeling in your fingers when everybody grabbed their proper wand for the first time wasn't some kind of signal from the wand. It was your body recognising a magic channel it was capable of using, and trying to push energy through it. With any other object, energy would just flow around it, but in that particular case, it was like trying to clean an old chimney. Sparks bursting out of the wand was quite a nice touch for the picture.

Then when you cast a spell, energy from your body had to gather in your wand, (Hurray for the waving part, giving you time), then force its way through any kind of energy in the air, and after getting to the object finally do its proper work. Just look how much you pay for lights in your home to know how much energy is lost by giving spells their glow. Wand users were in nearly constant state of replenishing their magical energy because their whole body was struggling to produce AND channel magic. That's why only most powerful wizards could do little stuff wandlessly as they produced more magic, some of it just slipping away.

Wandless magic on the other hand was about using energy that was already in the air. Just imagine yourself sitting in a cold closed room. Over time your body heat would make the room warmer. Magical energy radiated from every part of your body in similar way. But that energy didn't struggle with the surroundings, just mixing in small amounts with energy already present. And if you wanted to do something, magic "sticking" to the object you want to affect, or near it, was usually enough to do the trick.

It would be treated as a ridiculous notion by the magical community, but the only people that Harry could name that were still using magic as it was meant to, were children. Really young ones were too small to exhibit any magic, their bodies too busy with growing to waste any amount of energy by sending it outside. By the time the rapid growth

stops they were probably already taught that some things just don't happen. But that leaves accidental magic, which really shouldn't be named that way. It was just response of body reacting on pure instinct to a great need of the mind, known truths be damned. Not-learned magic, or something similar is more fitting. Just the thing about it being done by instinct should tell something how natural it should be.

But as their teaching progressed, it becomes evident that magical schools educate body to the centre, and slightly on one side. One could imagine that only your arm with mouth on it was suffice to do magic. And it was probably good image of the situation, because just like after living for 30 years a right handed person would start writing with left one, the same way would feel person trying to do wandless magic when he used wand for all those years. Yes, of course you can learn how to write with both hands, but you would still reach for everything with your main hand first. To learn wandless magic you would need to break through all those years of thinking with incantations and spell patterns in mind, before you would make any real progress.

Those things Harry will know after he will be done with the learning schedule that Salazar left in his memories, but for now, he was busy sneaking around the school for another bedtime story from a certain snake.

Slytherins monster Hogwarts legends call it. But even with deadliest venom and stare that could kill at first glance, it wasn't scariest thing about it. It was what was stored in a thousand year old mind. Because what really was purpose of basilisk in Chamber of Secrets was a role of messenger, bringing tales of old ways to anyone who wanted to listen.

Even locked inside the castle all those years, hibernating through some time, it knew what was happening. Past from listening to the stories passed down when Hogwart was being built, later heard from tales that other animals brought in exchange of advice from great snake. And even if they were only tales for the old serpent, probably repeated as they were heard, Harry could make connections between them.

Humans didn't start as great warriors, conquerors of the wild. At first, humans were scavengers, using their mental capacity to think of a

way of scaring other animals from carcass of game hunted by a predator, eating fruits and mushrooms if there wasn't any meat. It was only when we thought of spears, distancing ourselves from claws and teeth, that we truly started to hunt. But still, it was for smaller animals or fish. Primitive bows still didn't get us on top of food chain, as arrows shot from those were simply too weak to kill a boar, not saying anything about bear or mammoths. Humans were migrating mostly at that point, closely following animal. We struggled and fought, but we didn't wage war. We killed, but only something we could eat or in self defence, and never more than that we could chew. And for a time, it was good.

Then we discovered the art of growing plants and cultivating land, and some of us settled down, others still wandering further to seek more land. To deal with changing weather we build shelters, to keep animals away we built fences. Man learning to deal with earth that didn't want to bear crops, fending off animals and weather. And for a time, that too was good.

But we became adept at what we did. Too adept. First from wood then stone, our walls went higher and higher, until no animal could get through, and weather was no problem. Earth gave multitude of food when we learnt what to do. And within our safe keep, well fed, we grew in strength and numbers. It wasn't that good that we grew in arrogance as well.

As earlier man was part of nature, living in it, among other species, now we could raze entire forests to the ground, going back to safety of our towns for sleep. Any animal "stupid" enough to attack us would be hunted down and killed, because how dare they attack one of us. Like burning large area just because we needed place place for a new field, no matter how many animals lived there, didn't count.

Harry sometimes just couldn't listen, when basilisk went into one of his rants. Monster they say, but while listening, you couldn't say that. After he was done ranting, the snake would take a deep breath, and continue, but in a voice of someone tired, someone who saw and listened to enough of terrible things. Harry couldn't believe when he heard the story of statues of snakes inside the chamber.

When place for them on the surface was growing smaller and smaller, snakes would come down to the Chamber. Hundreds of snakes, proud animals, choosing death from slow and painful

struggle to catch anything to eat, that in the end they would still loose. Chamber of Secrets wasn't build with statues, and what was now acting as columns were thousands of serpents petrified when basilisk wasn't large enough to kill with his gaze fast enough.

It wasn't only muggle strive to control territory that was responsible for animals dying down. Wizards hid their lands, but new way of casting spells left no "free magic" hanging in the air, so all the species living off of it just dwindled in numbers. It went so far as that creatures like dragons and unicorns could live in larger groups only in reserves, among energy caught by tight wards, and partly on potions that wizards used to feed them so they could regrow ingredients that were harvested.

Basilisk told him that he would laugh to death if it came to pass, that humans cut one forest too much, and we would slowly run out of fresh air. Indeed that particular snake wasn't to eager to move from its lair to hunt people down. Not when we were making such a fine job at killing ourself.

But between what Harry heard from the serpent and anything that Slytherin phantom contained in his memories, when he compared it with books about wizarding history, it came that sign over Olivanders shop wasn't the only misprint. It was like reading book from the middle.

Before the Wizengamot was formed there could have been nothing at all, there was so little information about history from that time. Harry would have learnt more believing in muggle legends and fairy tales from that time. As fantastic and over-exaggerated they were, with that piece of truth in every story, they were more than History of Magic books contained.

Of course, History of Magic book was filled with all those goblin rebellions, but with magical community hiding every piece of land they could from muggles, rapidly changing fauna, there must have been some struggle of who claimed what part. As victor writes the history, and Harry had only wizarding texts describing that event, it was clear whose side of the story he was reading.

But for Wizengamot itself it was just written that it was bunch of families joining in an alliance, and told about what was done couple generations later. One could say that true history was lost, but after

some searching Harry found most interesting note. Because even if you didn't want to know what your family did during that time, you certainly wanted to know what your family owned.

What Wizengamot turned out to be was gathering of wand-craters, spell-inventors and other such occupations, proclaiming true and proper way of magic, as it would seem from the history. Earlier, with mages learning from talking to one another, they couldn't possibly earn anything from selling wands, spell books or anything in similar fashion, so it wasn't too good for their business to mention anything about "earlier".

So, what do a Heir-of-Slytherin-in-training do to overthrow an ancient society of merchants who ensured that their fortune wouldn't be endangered? It was good that Harry was still in-training, because it left him much time to ponder on that question.

It was also good that certain pair of twins was too busy to catch his trips around the castle, as they were otherwise occupied...

AN. We know Voldemort could do magic before Hogwarts, but he is too power hungry and too big of a control freak to do it. Sorry Voldie, only wand waving for you.

Yeah, yeah. I know that I don't know anything about history. This is fiction, move along.

If snake words offend anyone, then its good that I deleted most of what was there. I just sometimes have that louse mood and go into hissy fit. If anyone need overall human bashing material, just write me.

Note to self: rewrite this crap.

OK, no worry. I salvaged my books from the lawn, and they pretty much intact. Well you know, original Harry Potter books by J. K. Rowling will still be useful in writing this fic. Even if only for checking time-line.

But as Harry was learning all those things, time didn't stop for him to do so, and he still needed to participate in school life. Most notably Quidditch practices, as Wood doubled training time, saying that they won with Slytherins only because they weren't familiar with their brooms, something Gryffindor team couldn't count on, as the green robed team was spending many hours correcting that. Woods immediate response to that, was to increase number of trainings, and Harry again was reminded that you simply couldn't speak fanatics out of something. If it would rain any harder that day, it would be like playing in the giant lake, but then Wood would probably just train them how to grow gills.

So it was drenched Harry Potter getting back to the common room one stormy Saturday, that spotted Nearly Headless Nick, ghost of Gryffindor, staring out of the window with face as gloomy as the weather.

"Hello Sir Nicholas" said Harry, wondering if using honorific's would uplift ghosts mood, remembering that he didn't like nickname that students gave him.

"Ah, hello." responded ghost that was brought from his thoughts. "You look troubled, young Potter." Nick added after noticing frown that seemed to be Harry's constant companion nowadays.

"So do you." replied Harry, noting his sober thoughtfulness.

At first, Gryffindor ghost wanted to dismiss it, but then burst with how a half an inch of skin really shouldn't be the whole reason why he hadn't been accepted to join the Headless Hunt, showing the letter that was sent back to him as he went on with complaints. Harry was glad that he didn't do the nearly-headless comment. But that rant didn't last long, because Mrs. Norris showed and went on mewling at the muddy puddle that gathered at his feet.

Sir Nicholas went to warn him that Filch was in a bad mood because even when sick he had to work to clean some nasty things from dungeons, but Harry just watched his mud stained clothes, then

quickly contemplated just how old could ghost before him be. Finally he looked at Nick and winked, as dirt from his robes just flowed to the ground, mixed with what already was on the floor, and formed into pair of sticky shoes that went on down the corridor with Mrs. Norris chasing after them. At least that was what Nick saw, being unable to see Magie taking a stroll in her fancy pair of shoes.

When he turned back to Harry, he saw that the young man stepped nearer to the window that the ghost was hovering by, leaving an continuous line of footprints on the floor. Harry could just put his finger to his lips signalling to the ghost to stay quiet, when Argus Filch came into the hallway, wheezing probably not from the run through the school, but also from the flu which signs were clearly noticeable.

"Who!..." the caretaker tried to ask pointing to the mud on the floor, while still taking deep breaths.

"I wouldn't know, sir, as we just came here. It was good enough that Sir Nicholas was so good as to accompany me while I waited by the door to dry off." Harry said, Nick giving just slight bow of acknowledgement.

Filch looked at the marks on the floor, then back to Harry whose robes were certainly damp, but not as mud dripping as it would require to leave marks that he could see.

"You don't look too good, sir." Harry said, pointing Filch's sickened look. "Maybe I could help clean this part of hallway? It would give us opportunity to finish our discussion." he added pointing to Nick still hovering nearby.

"I don't want you showing off your magic tricks..." snapped Filch.

"I don't bring my wand outside any more, because I could lose it in this weather. But my aunt made me clean the floor more than once, sir."

Of course Harry didn't want to get in trouble for the mess on the floor, but he also didn't want someone else cleaning something that was his mistake. Harry saw enough times caretakers doing their work when he was still in muggle school, staying long after lessons ended to make sure Dudley didn't linger nearby, talking with his gang.

Every child in school thought that one chewing gum, or piece of trash that they dropped wasn't a big thing. But if in entire school there was couple of hundreds of students, and even if only part of them did it, you got a massive amount of things to clean, after just one day of school, instead of just making sure everything was in order in every class.

Argus Filch had to do a double take of the situation. He could easily do the same job in muggle society, without half the trouble he had here, but that thrice damned Headmaster talked him into taking the position, with words of how good it would be to show students that not everything had to be done with magic. But when he first appeared on the halls of Hogwart, his work wasn't appreciated, but ridiculed by students, who appeared to be having good fun making his work harder. So as the pranks grew more vicious, so did his responses to the students, till the point where he found guilty children who didn't even notice they were doing anything wrong.

But now, he had a young man standing before him, asking if he could be of any assistance even if he could get out of cleaning corridors without much trying. Argus Filch nodded, and begun to lead Harry to his office for an additional mop, just to see if he was serious about it. When he got to his office and spotted letter from "Kwikspell: A correspondence course in beginners magic." he stiffened and then hurriedly hid his secret, fearing someone could have seen it. But when he gazed at Harry to see if he was watching for a blackmail material with which he could get out of future punishments, he saw him standing in front of the office with his back to the door, minding his own business and waiting patiently.

"Here's the mop. Just leave it when you finish, I'll pick it on my way back." said the caretaker sending Harry on his way. Filch really had to wonder if there were cases where you didn't have to teach discipline by hanging students from the ceiling by their ankles to get the point across. His amazement would reach new heights when he would go to inspect the hallway, finding spotless floor that didn't need second round of cleaning.

"Harry, that... I never... I mean, I've heard, but I've never seen..." stammered Gryffindor ghost when Harry got back and started cleaning the floor.

"Erm, about that bit of magic. You mind not spreading it too much? I wouldn't be too sure of that little secret coming to light just yet. Maybe I could do something for you to ensure that stayed private for now?" Harry asked astonished ghost.

"You don't have to bargain with me about that, you could have just asked." said ghost, standing just slightly straighter. "But it would be nice if you could come to my five hundredth death-day. Unfortunately its the same time when the school feast takes place, so I would understand if you were unable to come."

Right then Harry had an idea. "Will those guys from Headless Hunt be there?"

"They are invited, but why do you ask?"

"Lets make a deal. I'll come to your death-day, and if I can give you another chance at joining them, then you'll tell me about some things you remember from the past and we'll call it even. How about that?" asked Harry, just now realising that there were more than single hundreds year old being at the castle.

"Young man, you got yourself a deal." answered much more cheerful ghost.

"OK, so you could start by telling me about this Headless Hunt thing, while I'm busy with cleaning the floor..."

Halloween arrived, and as Harry was going down to the dungeons, Hermione and Neville accompanied him. Hermione was thrilled to learn something new, saying things like there probably weren't many people who were at a death-day party. Neville just shrugged and said that any random thing happening around Harry would be more entertaining than any kind of party. If you added ghosts to it, he couldn't think of a way to top the show that was sure to happen.

After going through the hallway that was now looking more tomb like than ever, they arrived at the door and were greeted by the host, Sir Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington. Hermione and Neville went straight inside, but Harry lingered slightly to exchange couple of words with the ancient ghost.

"What was that about?" asked Neville after Harry rejoined them, clearly pleased with whatever he heard.

"You'll see." Harry replied. Hermione looked confused and turned to Neville if he knew something. Neville just responded with I-knew-there-would-be-some-kind-of-a-show kind of shrug.

Time went on with the three watching social behaviour of the dead, "You never know if you won't need it." joked Harry when one ghost asked why he was watching everything so closely, but more than that ghosts didn't bother the living too much. It was good, as the chill tended to be stronger near the spectres, and with whatever freezing feeling that was lingering in the air, warmer clothes that they prepared beforehand dealt good enough.

The only other time when they were disturbed by a ghost was when Peeves came to them with Myrthle, trying to convince the girl-ghost what awful things they said about her. Hermione went on defensive, looking far too ashamed of herself for any comments about how pretty the ghost was to be effective. Good enough that Harry helped her along.

"I must say that I agree. You look so nice, that I would like to ask you for a dance." he said while extending his hand, doing a short bow at the same time.

"You just want to make a joke of me. Tell later how Myrthle can't dance." the ghost scowled at him, complaining in her wailing voice.

"You at least don't have to worry about tripping over your own feet like I do." Harry responded, making joke at his own inexperience when it came to dancing, which actually, managed to get a slight giggle from the usually moaning ghost. "But I don't know any dead music, nor any kind of wizarding music to be exact. Would you mind asking the band to play something easy to dance to?" Harry continued.

Myrthle was just too happy to ensure an occasion to dance, not trusting that it would stay that way for long. Because she didn't meet many young boys wanting to dance with her, not minding that others would see, to a song that she picked. There weren't any occasions like that, not when she was alive, and certainly not after she died. Until now.

"Quite well done, young Potter." commented Sir Nicholas after the ghost of the girl was gone. His living friends on the other hand just stared at him like he was out of his mind.

"What? It's just pointless to assure someone with words, when he was earlier hurt by them. It is easier to reassure them by simply showing that you mean it." he responded to the stares, but didn't have opportunity to add anything. Same thing that cut him short unabled Myrthle to ask the band for a certain song. The same thing still, made Harry and Nick to exchange a meaningful look which Neville caught and just knew that show was about to begin.

The thing that did all this, was a sound of a hunting horn coming from a distance. Just moments later dozen of riders on ghost horses burst through the dungeon walls. When others were still around the dungeon, the lead rider, the one blowing the horn, came down from his horse and strode in direction of host of the party, who appeared to be busy talking with a living boy.

"Nick! How are you? Head still hanging in there?" greeted the rider loudly, making ghost that were watching chuckle at the joke.

Sir Nicholas just made a short pause in his talk with Harry to acknowledge the ghost.

"Ah, Patrick, you arrived. Good, good. Welcome to the party, and enjoy." he said half-heartedly, and immediately went back to his talk.

That made riders stop, and everyone fell silent over that obvious disregard of someone as important as Sir Patrick Delaney-Podmor, leader of Headless Hunt, and owner of probably foot long list of other titles. Sir Patrick just blinked in surprise.

"Young man, why don't you leave so the dead can talk in peace?" Patrick tried an different approach.

"I'm sorry and mean no disrespect sir, but the subject is just too interesting to end it at this point." Harry responded in the same voice which Nick used earlier.

Sir Patrick was again speechless, being disregarded as unimportant by a mere human.

"Boy, don't you find me threatening? You would do better if you would run away, screaming, before I lose my temper." he said more firmly, while looking Harry in the eye, holding his head in his extended hand.

"If you ask for truth, I would say you're... fine for a ghost." responded Harry, sounding quite bored, which made ghost around the room snicker on Patrick's account. "But nothing as threatening as our own Sir Nicholas. That reminds me, Sir Nicholas, you didn't tell what exactly did you do to the first years dormitory, and how you possibly made those girls munch on that... But please, I just don't want to know where all the blood came from." said Harry with a shudder, clearly returning to their previous subject, but now in a voice everyone could hear.

While being a ghost you didn't have many things that caught your interest, so it was quite a all around sport, and later trading stories of how you traumatized and haunted the living. Hearing words like first year girls, lots of blood, and munching in same sentence just caught everyone's attention. Seeing Harry shudder and this horror struck look on the other living faces, ensured that story was at least partly true. Neville and Hermione got that expression because they were simply surprised, not hearing the story before.

"Ah, you see, the blood wasn't the main problem. The meaty parts were. They just didn't stick to the walls. Kept sliding to the floor. As for making kids eat it, I just convinced them it was candy." said Sir Nicholas continuing as they have planned.

Hearing that most of the jaws in the room dropped to the floor. In case of couple of more decayed ghosts, quite literally.

"Wait, if he does that sort of things, why are you still talking to him?" interrupted Sir Patrick.

"Because all the horror is worth being given a chance to find guidance from such a fine mind, with so many years of experience." Harry replied.

"Don't listen to him, he's just young." responded Sir Nicholas, playing the humble part. "But it is quite true that if you would have added me to the Headless Hunt, being unable to play a game of

Horseback Head Juggling or Head Polo would be smallest of my problems, as I fear I wouldn't have any time to spare to play with you." he continued, sounding nothing like he cared about not getting to the club, making whisper around him much louder.

"Oh, surely we could schedule something. And there are many others games we could play." tried Sir Patrick.

"Well, maybe." allowed Nick "But I don't see how it is of any importance as I'm not a member." he added with a shrug.

"Let us talk about that part." quickly replied Sir Patrick while dragging ghost of Gryffindor tower into secluded part of the dungeon.

After Harry danced with Myrthle just like he promised, even as it was kind of awkward experience, the only three living beings concluded that they had enough, and politely made their exit. But while going back to the common room, Hermione just couldn't stop herself and burst with questions.

"What was all that about that?"

"Well, Nick wanted to get into this Headless Hunt club of some kind. Something with status being important even after you were dead. But when he told me about it, I thought it was just group of buffoons." Harry commented.

"Why is that?" asked Neville, wanting to understand this part before Hermione would throw different set of questions.

"Well, I don't know them, but just think about it. Beheading in the past was commonly used form of execution, being done in front of everyone, kind of show-like. Not mentioning that to get there you had to commit some sort of crime, or just plainly enrage enough people. But those guys even after they died that way, are trying to act superior. Like having your head cut off was best way to die." Harry said shaking his head.

"So why the show?" urged Hermione.

"Oh, it is just people like that like to deny entry to anyone, even if they clearly have the right to be there. You know, to show that only few can have such an honour. Sir Nicholas being nearly headless,

as hard as he tried to get in, he was just ridiculed more. But when someone who is popular and shows how their little club is unimportant, THEY try to get him to change his mind. Partly because they want for him to stop talking about them in that way, but in part because having another popular and important member raise their prestige. That's why this little show making Nick look frightening, noble, and wise." he finished with a shrug.

"That reminds me. What did you really do to first year girls dormitory?" asked Neville.

"Erm... I filled it with things like jelly among other stuff, and dumped a ton of syrup over it." said Harry quietly, making his two companions stop with confused looks on their faces.

"What? First years didn't complain about their new tapestry, they found it quite tasty to be exact. But to ghosts who can't make distinction between syrup or anything else, since they can't smell or taste it, it would look like..."

"Scene from a horror movie with little girls munching on..." Hermione finished in a whisper with horror-struck expression, face slapping herself as to not finish that particular thought. Neville meanwhile just doubled with laughter.

Even if I would be a twin of J. K. Rowling, my writing style is nothing like hers. Since she doesn't have a twin, and I don't have a writing style to talk about, this side of pondering if I own Harry Potter is moot from the start.

Living in Hogwarts was strange at times. Well, this sentence isn't as surprising when you consider what Hogwarts taught, unless it is added that it isn't that side of strange that I'm talking about. With all the things that could happen in a magical school, it is surprising that majority of students were content with following just few that stood out most, trading stories regarding them, making the school to be one big rumour mill. Well, maybe in this regard, the magical community was just like the rest of the world.

When the buzz regarding Halloween ended, the school would always catch second wind, switching to the subject of Quidditch match that was always scheduled short time after. But this year, there was slight bump in this, caused by something that happened couple of days before the game.

Harry was heading to breakfast, when he was intercepted by certain twins, who started walking on either side of him, making him unable to not hear what they were talking about.

"Oh, dear brother of mine. You remember that Potter kid that we conversed with couple of days ago?" started one of them.

"Vaguely." commented the other, making Harry shake his head.

"Yes, quite right. But he made that comment about only snobs attending this fabulous institution." the first one went on, with his nose in the air.

"As, interesting as that might be, dear brother, we could never know how such a thing would look like." came a reply, after which they looked at each other, shrugged, and went on their way.

That made Harry stop in his track, but only for a moment, after which Weasley Twins pranking reputation caught up to him. He moved, slightly faster, after the twins who were heading to the Great Hall. He felt that he didn't want to miss this.

Breakfast at first was just like any other, in spite of Harry's attempts to catch something amiss.

And then it happened.

There was a commotion at the Slytherin table, with choir of surprised yelps, and shouts of outrage. When Harry turned to look what was happening, he saw something that looked like a caricature of what twins were hinting at just moments earlier, because now House of Slytherin consisted only of Crabbe's, Goyle's and Malfoy's. Or rather, people who looked like them. The only part wrong, were proportions. You got three foot Crabbe and Goyle, standing near six foot tall Malfoy in one place, and short, chubby Malfoy, with stick-like guard.

But as whole Hall roared with laughter, Harry's new found "How you could do that" nature kicked in.

'I think I read something about a potion that would let you transform into someone else, but to change proportions you would...' he didn't finish, as someone snapped their fingers right in front of his face. Jumping slightly he turned to see Magie sitting on the table. After rising an eyebrow at the surprise on his face, she pointed to the commotion.

Paying attention again, he noticed that the picture have changed. Now everyone looked normal, if you didn't count a party mask on their face.

'Can you make it back?' he asked, turning to Magie.

She just swept her hand over his face, closing his eyes just for a moment, after which he could again see the bizarre event that was going on. Watching closely, he could think of only one thing. Distortions.

The bent mirror effect was caused by light going through areas of different density, making it refract. It was the same thing as with light crossing between water and air, but more complex, since instead misplacing, you wanted to distort things, and had only air to work with. Complex, but doable.

The funniest thing was, that when teachers would want to dispel it, they will concentrate on the physical change, since you couldn't see

difference between mask and body in the changed image. But it wouldn't help them much, since the surrounding was affected.

With that question answered, Harry watched the show of all the Malfoy's stating who they were, when teachers tried to bring at least some order. It was close enough to them saying "I'm better than this." while wearing Malfoy's face.

But after a couple of minutes, he had another thing that he had to contemplate.

Late in the evening when everyone were preparing to bed, Harry still sat in the common room, staring into the fire.

'What's bugging you this time?' Magie asked.

'You know, watching all those Malfoy's in the great hall, it struck a chord and I got this idea, but I just can't prove it.' he answered, slightly surprised that this time, she was lying on the couch instead of appearing in strange way.

'What idea? And what was so interesting in this prank?'

'The thing was seeing all the "similar" people in one place. And I've been wondering, maybe pure-bloods are right.' he said, again thinking hard.

'Pure-bloods are right?' Magie asked disbelievingly.

'Oh, no. Not about all that superiority. But they're saying that magic is in the blood. Maybe they're right about that part.' he replied with a frown.

'How so?'

'Salazar told us that before Hogwarts, you had to be lucky to find a wizard to train you. But with a place where all the "similar" people could meet... What if magic indeed is in the blood. Or in genes more exactly. Look at it like on the entire earth, there were only couple of people with green eyes, or brown hair. Since there is no one like them around, their children may, or may not have the same eyes or hair colour. But this is still in the genes, so after couple of generations, or when you meet a person with someone who had

green-eyed father, your children had more chance for it. Some place in time it would surface. But when Hogwarts was built, there was a place where only brown haired, green eyed people were. Maybe at first it didn't matter, but after couple of generations...'

'You would have only wizards born in wizard families.' finished Magie, seeing his point.

'Well, not exactly, since there is always a chance for a squib. But it still fits, since now non-magic genes are the ones surfacing once in a while. It also explains why there are so many muggleborns. With population way, way higher than when Hogwarts was built, there is higher probability of someone having right set of genes. So, if once there was one wizards every ten thousand children, and it stayed that way...'

'Considering population, we have enough wizards to fill the school.' once again finished Magie. 'It sounds good, so why are you still pondering this?'

'Because no matter how hard I think about it, I can't prove any of this. I just don't know enough. My only proof is that it fits.' he answered, rubbing his eyes, and then started to chuckle slightly. 'But I have to say, that I like this idea more and more when I think about proving it to the pure-bloods.'

'Why is that?'

'Imagine them, with their arrogance, being told that they're no more than another minority.'

AN. Sorry for the wait. Even thou I had this sketched out, I just couldn't sit down and write it. Even now its kind of too short for me, and doesn't look entirely right.

At first I thought about Polyjuicing older Slytherines to look like Malfoy, and giving lower years party masks with goofy Crabbe and Goyle faces. Then I remembered that we are only at year 2, so Malfoy is younger and wouldn't be able to be part of "Malfoy's" group. Also it takes too long to make so much polyjuice just for a prank. Last thing is that in the books Twins were more of Charms masters than anything else, so this prank should play in their field.

About my look on magic. Who said that magic have to be miraculous and break any science law there is. I think that magic is just a shortcut through those laws, letting you do right now what would require complicated machinery, or years of research. Or... we still don't know every right or exception's from the rights that we have now. That's why Harry, or any other mage should, learn about his surroundings. Doing something by force, simply because you can, is easy. But repercussions of that can be far greater than anyone expects.

Since yesterday was first day of school for me, I don't know what will happen when they will throw real assignments at me. Its either of two. School-work will consume too much of my time for me to write as much as I would like to, or I will write more, since I tend to run away from hard work, searching for something more fun/creative...

I'm still studying. J. K. Rowling has that behind her. If that in itself isn't enough, I can give you my exams shedule, which clearly state that I wouldn't have the time to write Harry Potter series.

'Acting is so much fun.' Harry thought to himself after another Defence Against the Dark Arts class.

After accident with pixies, Gilderoy didn't risk another "remodelling" of his class, opting instead for reading passages from his books, picking Harry to re-enact it with him.

But Harry didn't mind. Acting was useful in so many ways. You could raise your creativity by creating characters, making them evolve as the scene progressed. Sometimes it was easier to say what was troubling you, when you were pretending to be someone else speaking about the problem. Also it helped to dissolve problems before them got out of hand. You just switch the battling sides places, making them "pretend" to be the other side, and by extension, admitting that they act in a biased way. Not to forget that it was immensely fun to play with acting. It allows you to be as weird or goofy as you would like, act in any strange way you could possibly imagine, and it would be okay to do so.

In this instance, it was fun making fool out of Lockhart just by playing his part.

This particular class, Gilderoy was trying to convince Harry to play a part of Werewolf. But when scene started, Harry just stood there, cleaning his fingernails. Lockhart blinked. Then went into next motivational speech, urging Harry to do his best. When Harry said he was ready, scene started again... and this time Harry just rocked on the balls of his feet. Gilderoy tried again and again, every time harder than before, to make Harry act like a Werewolf. And every single time, Harry found some other unimportant thing to do.

"Harry, why aren't you acting like a werewolf?" finally asked irritated Defence Instructor.

"But Professor, I am." innocently replied Harry with confusion all over his face.

"No, you're not. You don't howl or growl, you don't imitate fangs or claws, and..."

"But Professor," interrupted him Harry, speaking in the same manner as before. "It's the middle of a day, and full moon is still couple of weeks away. There is no chance for that kind of Werewolf..." after which there could be heard suppressed chuckles from Gryffindors, and snorts of laughter from Slytherins in response of the petty joke.

"But Harry! We are ACTING!" whined Lockhart. If he would just stamp his feet, he would look more like a spoiled child, rather than adult.

"Professor, lets then bring some props and decorations to make it more believable."

Gilderoy stopped, and a pleased smile blossomed on his face.

"What a swell idea! Why haven't I thought about it before. Bravo for that Harry. Bravo." Lockhart applauded, glad that Harry was at last taking part in the scene. But, it was short lived...

"Great. Then while I prepare, why don't you transfigure the decorations to look just like the scene of the duel looked like?" Harry said, and not waiting for response, left the room to "prepare".

Defence Professor was left standing awkwardly in front of the class, which was watching his every move. Thinking fast about how to sidestep displaying his lack of skill with a wand, he quickly begun his usual "Well, you all know that I could do it with ease, but I'm a teacher, and it would be good opportunity for you to practice your transfiguration skills. So, anyone?..." at which snorts or shakes of head were only reply as he tried to find someone who would do it for him.

In fact, over last couple of lessons, there was a neck-breaking fall in how much people in Harry's defence class respected Gilderoy Lockhart. And when stories about it spread over the rest of the school, there was similar trend in the rest of the student population.

First time Gilderoy made Harry play a part of villager affected by Babbling Curse. After Lockhart "cured" him, Harry couldn't (or more likely refused) to speak... for an entire day. Neville helped him with the act by repeating story Harry wrote him on parchment, that

Gilderoy cast a spell unabling him to talk. No amount of scanning by school nurse, did show anything. Gilderoy, when asked about the incident, went on in a speech about complications in very precise spell... When Harry mysteriously regained his voice, he simply commented that "Unabling someone to speak, saves him discomfort of non stop babbling... so essentially, it worked."

Next time Lockhart tried, Harry was meant to be a Yeti. When he heard that, he grabbed pair of dirty sponges from the blackboard, and made a huge cloud from it. When dusty powder settled down... no one saw Harry till the end of the lesson, and no amount of searching that Gilderoy did brought him closer to locating him. When the bell rung Harry just stepped out of Defence Professor's private quarters with cup of tea in his hand and munching on some snacks, with "Can I stop acting? Staying hidden all the time is such a hard thing to do..."

But what Harry called "his best act" was when he had to play the part of a vampire. He begun with draping his robes across his face, speaking his lines with distinctive accent and emanating a low deep chuckle, while backing in to the shadow in the corner, guarding himself from light at all times. It was probably the cheesiest Count Dracula ever made. But when he was fully hid in the shadow, and Gilderoy was playing his over-dramatic part of waiting to be attacked, Harry, with Magie's help, just levitated fastly transfigured toy bat on top of Lockhart's head, making it stick in place. What commenced afterwards, was five minutes of Gilderoy Lockhart bouncing against the walls, screeching an ear-piercing sound, and screaming for someone to get this "horrid beast" away from him every time he had enough breath to do it. It only stopped because the transfiguration reversed and toy broke apart.

Getting back to here and now, Gilderoy seeing that no one was interested in helping him, just told them that their homework was to write a poem about his victory over the Wagga Wagga Werewolf. Would be it much of a surprise if I said that most of them displayed how he waited a month for full moon to battle the werewolf?

'Oh yes, acting can be so much fun.' Harry thought again.

Day of the match came, and massive amount of excitement followed. Earlier everyone wanted for Slytherin to lose, just to unable them striding around school like they owned it. But now there were some

that couldn't bet against a team with newest brooms available. Only Gryffindor team experience balanced odds somehow. And of course, there was Harry. Harry once again was in the spotlight, as everyone awaited what he would come up with now.

While everyone got into their seats, captains gave their team pep-talks. When they were ready, Madam Hooch released the balls, and game begun. It was evident that Slytherins practised using their new brooms, because they quickly dominated the field. They were blurs, and field seemed to be filled with green. But Gryffindors weren't slacking, and Slytherin attack was taken out by precisely aimed bludgers from Weasley twins. Those few that got past that, were stopped by Wood. Gryffindor chasers, using short passes, managed to get the action under Slytherin goal posts, only to be overwhelmed by every player from the other team, as they always managed to cross the length of the field faster. It was a stalemate, and unless one of the teams would let go, it could go a long time, totally exhausting players. It was evident that the game would be decided among the Seekers.

Harry saw that, and he had to think about something. Draco was following his every move, counting on his superior broom to catch the snitch first. All he had to do was to wait for Harry to spot and move for the snitch, in attempt to end the game early, as it was evident that Gryffindors were compensating poor equipment with stamina. So Harry begun slowly moving across the field, keeping one eye on a game, and the other at the snitch, with Malfoy constantly in tow. After a moment of this, he accelerated, but not to a speed that would state he was aiming for the snitch. As he flew, he begun to do barrel rolls, dives, or any other acrobatic stunt he could think of on the spot.

"You won't shake me off this time, Scar-head!" shouted Malfoy after one more violent evolution, but still followed Harry, as if doing everything he did in itself was a proof that Draco is a skilled flier. And as they accelerated further, one chasing after the other, it seemed that both forgot that they were supposed to chase the snitch, not each-other. As if he just remembered that, Harry stopped abruptly.

"Done running?" asked Malfoy, slightly out of breath due to the mid-air aerobic.

"I wasn't running, rather leading you into..." but he didn't finish, as the person he was talking to was struck by not one, but two perfectly aimed bludgers simultaneously, provided by the Twins. "Yeah, what I was saying..." commented Harry when Draco laid sprawled on the field.

Due to that slight slip in defences, Gryffindor lost couple of points, but without having to worry about competition, Harry could fully concentrate on the snitch, and caught it shortly after, winning the game.

AN. Yeah, as I said. Second day of classes and I already find too much time to think about non-school related subjects. Sorry for another short chapter, but at least its a fast update.

J. K. Rowlings ownership of Harry Potter is a lie, is a lie. Since I try to be original, you might at least think a while about it... Wait, did I wrote it right?...

After the game, Hogwarts once again settled in it's normal routine, at first filled with talk about latest game, later only with school-work. But once again there was change in this natural course of action, when announcement of duelling club, with first meeting that night. Neville and Hermione weren't particularly interested, since Neville still didn't break through his low self-esteem. Hermione was more troubled, since it was perfect opportunity to learn something new. But she summarised that she was more of a studious person, and violence wasn't particularly playing in her field. But Harry had more than his own thoughts to consider.

'Are we going?' Magie asked when he was sitting in his dormitory, having read the note on notice board when he was returning from classes.

'Well... As interesting as it is, I have a bad feeling that Lockhart will be instructing us.' Harry said with distaste.

'Why?' she asked with a frown.

'There wasn't name or notice of instructor. Bringing new one would probably require a fee, like they do with apparition course. Since this isn't such case, and only new teacher this year is Lockhart, he is most probably the one who proposed it. If it would be someone else, I assume that by now, Duelling Club would have a long tradition.'

'Oh, pish-posh. It isn't like you need to do exactly what everyone else does. Besides, you won't get too many chances to practice combat spells any time soon. And surely, you wouldn't want to be unprepared when the need arrives, right?' at which his response was to snort at her sidestepping mentioning that her lack of skill was the reason why he was unprepared.

'Besides' she continued, brighting up 'it's time you take a look at this.' she finished, bringing a leather bound book from behind her back.

'What is this?' he asked, while opening the book. Inside, he found pictures, but more interestingly, they were of people living in his head. 'You made a photo album?'

'Yes.' she answered, smiling brightly. 'I had this grand idea that when we would need someone to help' she glared at Harry to stop him from mentioning her skills 'we wouldn't have to think hard, just flip a couple of pages to find someone.' she finished, clearly proud of herself. Harry just stared at her incredulously.

'OK... I too, get bored sometimes.' Magie added, looking anywhere but him. Harry just chuckled, finding this answer more in her style.

He flipped couple more pages in the album and scowled.

'You know, when I think about duelling, or fighting, I can't omit thinking about someone getting hurt. I don't really remember anyone who could be... "violent" on a whim.' Harry said, having finished looking through the album.

'And why is that?' asked Salazar, who just appeared.

'What exactly?' responded Harry, not really knowing to what Slytherin was referring.

'With so many people in a single town, and every single one having entirely different mind set, there must have been some misunderstandings or even conflicts. So why aren't you able to think of one person who is at least a little violent, or angry?'

'I... haven't thought about it.'

Harry's first response was to answer "I don't know" but it wouldn't be fine with Slytherin if he did so. That phrase had some finality to it, some sense of failure, probably from overuse in classes or other score-related situations. On the other hand, expression "I haven't thought about it", brought possibility and openness to discuss given subject. While the first one could mean that if the person haven't learned something by now, that person wouldn't do it at all, the second hinted that if the same person was given some time, they would come up with something, and even if it wouldn't be the ultimate answer, it would at least be probable. It could have even been that it was only Harry that made that distinction, but if Slytherin

would end up in someone's else's head, he would would certainly do the same with other expressions. Because basically, Salazar couldn't stand when someone gave up.

'I think' Harry started after a while of thought. 'as different those mindsets might appear, there isn't any fighting over is, because I understand them all.' At Slytherins raised eyebrow, he continued. 'People around the world are different. But as different they are, they basically want the same things. Live a sound life, have a proper job, live happily with their family in a good house. However you name it, the general picture is essentially the same. But then you get further, explaining what exactly is "sound life" or "proper job", and that's where the trouble starts, because not everyone thinks the same way about some things. So the smaller details you specify, the smaller group of people who thinks the same way you do. When you would specify every single thing in the picture, it would be only your "dream" life. But since those different mindsets are in my head, I know everything about them. Where elsewhere people would start proving to one-another that their way of living is "proper", "better" or however you name it, there is no need for that, since I can understand each and every single one of them. And since in the city everyone speaks what they think, it helps instantly clear the air, instead of letting it linger and build over time.' he smiled at Magie while quoting her, but then he scowled as one particular thought hit him. 'Now that I think about it... there probably isn't that many people who one day just stand up and do awful things because they can or want to. While there are some like that, I think that most cases we hear about are result of stress, frustration or other things. Essentially people not knowing how to deal with their problems, allowing things to continue until such a point that they end up in drastic, tragic, way.'

After Harry finished, there was a short silence after which Slytherin nodded, agreeing that given what Harry knew, his logic was sound.

'Another instance when wizards had to understand more than could be seen. Trained wizard could be a great force on the battlefield, but to get to a level of "trained wizard" you had to learn many things. Thats why we were mainly regarded as scholars and advisor's. Starting a war when you were right at the kings side was easy, but it was quite different thing to act as mediator and end a dispute before it even started, even if it was over something like different things in different cultures being regarded as impolite.' Salazar commented and vanished.

Harry had to accept long ago, that beside his "think about it" homework, Slytherin would just appear and point to or ask a curious question about one thing or another.

'As fun all that is...' said Magie while rolling her eyes 'What are we going to do about the duelling club?'

'Why? Have you suddenly found someone?' Harry asked while noticing her smug smile.

'Look here.' she answered, while giving him another book, this one thinner, and with soft cover.

When he opened the first page, Harry had to stop and do a double check to make sure he was seeing right. On the page he was looking at, there was a picture of a tall, well built man, his body covered in cuts visible under what was left of his clothes. Maybe that in itself wasn't that strange, but the most peculiar things were what looked like completely smooth porcelain mask on his face, without even holes for eyes, and a big sword which he seemed to wield without any problems.

As Harry flipped couple of next pages, there were more pictures of people in similar fashion, with different degrees of right-out-of-battle look and weapons they were carrying. Swordsmen in armours, knife wielding people in light battle robes, there was even one with a scythe...

'Why haven't I seen any of them before?' Harry asked, still turning the pages, though the book looked too thin to contain this many.

'Of course you did.' Magie answered matter of factly.

'But I don't remember meeting them...' he said, scowling.

'I didn't say you met them, I only said that you seen those before.'

Harry blinked. 'Then where did you get this from?' he asked while pointing at the thin book.

'From a comic-book stand.' Magie answered with a shrug.

'Comic-books?' Harry repeated, once again staring at the pictures. 'But I haven't read any...' he begun, confused, but stopped. 'Wait... there was this place on the way to school. Dudley and his gang hanged around, since it was nearest place with shops and other fun stuff. I never really went in there, and only saw glimpses of front covers...'

'Yep, that one.' Magie said, interrupting his reminiscence. 'So... are we going?' she asked again, growing impatient.

'Sure.' Harry finally said, smiling at her.

In the end, Neville and Hermione went as well. Neville couldn't pass watching Harry "at work". Hermione abandoned her thinking of pros and cons of going when it was evident that she would be the only one not to go. But when they entered the Great Hall at eight o'clock and saw, as Harry anticipated, Gilderoy Lockhart standing on the stage, already giving the welcoming speech.

The whole duelling club was in fact Lochart's ploy to build up his reputation among the students. That's why he picked a Potions professor, who, while all day spending in one room working on precise potions, couldn't possibly have any battle fitness or too much experience. He changed his mind in the instance when he was blasted from the stage in a way that simply couldn't help his credibility.

On the other hand, when students saw him being hit with an Expeliarmus, there were reactions varying from cheers to simple smiles. Lockhart could pass as celebrity for many years, if he only limited himself to couple public appearances each week. But while teaching at Hogwarts he was acting like like that every single day, and truth be told, it was sickening.

Celebrities should be treated more like super-heroes, rather than famous people. There is a side to their life where their which is fabulous, filled with red carpets, interviews and everything else. But they also, like everyone else, want to do normal day-to-day things, like sit in a restaurant with their friends, or even do shopping, without being assaulted.

No one can possibly be mega, ultra, or super, all the time, and that was why spending long times near Gilderoy could kill even the blind-

sighted crushes some of the witches had. And yes, he could do that even without Harry Potter around, since all Harry did was to create situations in which Lockhart still tried to pretend he had no flaws.

Just like now, when, after being unceremoniously blasted off the stage, he was acting like he planned it all along.

"Ok, why don't you practice it now. It was good idea to start with this spell Professor Snape..." Gilderoy rambled on, trying to stall until slight dizziness that he still had, stopped.

"We will now split you into pairs so you can..." but he was interrupted by a raised hand. "Yes, what is your question?"

"Shouldn't we also try a protective spell? It would allow us to practice two spells at one time, then partners would just switch between attack and defence." Harry proposed, not particularly wanting to just stand still and wait to be blasted from his feet.

"Oh, why not. We might as well. Why don't you step right here, so we can teach first pair and show the spells at the same time." said Lockhart, not wanting to be the one to do the wand-work.

Harry hesitated for a while, not knowing if it would be all-right to perform magic while everyone observed his every move. But as he noticed that everyone were already staring at him, he just shrugged and went to the stage. He would think of something, like he always did.

"Right, so we need a pair for you. Maybe..." said Gilderoy, while scanning the crowd.

"Malfoy." came from Snape, and without wasting time, Draco was on the stage.

"Well, then Harry. When Draco points his wand at you, you do this." he said while attempting some wiggling action, and dropped his wand. Harry just raised his eyebrow.

When Neville, standing in the back of the crowd, saw what Lockhart did, and that tic-like way Draco, who seemed to have developed a nervous reaction triggered by Harry, was clutching at his wand, he wished he had some of that corn-pop that Hermione told him about.

"On three." Gilderoy said. "One – Two – Three!"

At the starting call, Draco cast the disarming spell, and Harry did exactly what Lockhart did. He wiggled his wand and dropped it. Then bend town to pick it up, letting the spell float over his head.

When Draco took notice of what happened, he yelled another incantation, and it again missed Harry, as when he was straightening with his wand in hand, he stepped on his own robes, and fallen on his back. Over the next couple of minutes the Great Hall was filled with laughter at the sigh of more and more flustered Draco trying to aim at Harry who was falling in more and more bizarre way.

'I wonder if they would laugh harder if there would be mass of banana skins all over the stage, and Draco was throwing pies at me.' Harry thought as at last Snape and Lockhart intervened to end the scene.

Truth be told, Harry already knew that best defence was not to be where the spell hit. Dodging spells from Draco was nothing compared to getting away from Dudley's gang when they managed to surround him from time to time. At least after that, he knew how to fall without getting hurt.

But Draco obviously wasn't satisfied, seething with anger, he raised his wand and shouted "Serpensorita!" making a long black snake to shoot out of his wand. There were screams, and people quickly backed away from the dangerous animal. It didn't help when Lockhart blasted it into the air, supposedly trying to get rid of it. When it was back on the ground again, it was madder than before, hissing furiously and looking around for anyone near enough to strike.

"Expelliarmus." Harry said through gritted teeth, with his wand aimed at Gilderoy.

But instead the all of energy which always accompanied the spell, a piece of paper flew from seemingly nowhere, pushed by a wind that Harry couldn't feel. As it flew, the picture as now Harry noticed, grew and grew, until it was a size of a door and when it was right in front of Gilderoy, a person leaped out of it, the same well build man with

faceless porcelain mask. He landed near Lockhart, grabbed his wand with one hand, and half-turning, kicked Gilderoy in the stomach. Lockhart was sent flying, and the faceless man just tossed his wand in Harry's direction.

But Harry didn't pay any mind to the wand sailing through the air. He was just glad that as impressive the events only he could see were, they only took scant of a second, and while everyone's attention was on the snake, no one noticed lack of light when Harry cast his spell.

He did it because in part he was angry at the man, as he could have harmed the snake. Old Mother wouldn't be happy if Harry allowed something like that to happen. But more importantly, because that air-head was the person standing closest to a furious snake, who was just waiting to strike.

With everyone's attention now on a prone form of Defence Instructor, who was groaning slightly near the stage, Harry made few slow steps, getting nearer to the snake, slowly squatted down, and slid his hand out, placing it on the ground, only couple of feet from the snake. There was a massive intake of breath when everyone noticed what he did, but after that there was a complete silence. Everyone watched transfixed as the snake which was trashing around moments before, locked its eyes with Harry's, and after staring for a moment, completely motionless, it slithered close distance to Harry's hand. After one last check, when it flicked its tongue to taste the air, it slithered along Harry's arm, ending coiled around it, with its head on Harry's neck. Only then did Harry stand up, and just started walking to the doors of Great Hall, like nothing had happened.

"Potter! What are you doing with that snake?" shouted Snape, first person to recover, when Harry was about to exit.

"I'm taking it on the grounds, somewhere near the forest. I'll let it loose so it can breathe some fresh air, eat something or... do whatever snakes do." he answered with a shrug.

"Letting dangerous animal loose on school grounds?" Snape went on, his sneer in full force. "For endangering students..." he begun.

"Dangerous animal?" Harry asked, looking first straight at Snape, then on snake who appeared to be asleep, still coiled around him,

then again on Potions Professor. "Really?" he asked sarcastically. "From what I heard, there are worse things inside the FORBIDDEN Forest. And as for endangering students, why don't you ask person who brought it right in the middle of this group?" he finished, looking at Malfoy.

When Snape's only response was to grit his teeth, Harry shrugged and left the Great Hall, Neville and Hermione running behind him.

"Aren't you nervous walking like that?" asked Hermione, staring warily at the snake, who from time to time was flicking its tongue out.

"No, not really. If he would like to hurt me, he probably already would do that."

That didn't calm her.

"Look, what would you do if you would suddenly find yourself surrounded by unknown figures, then blasted couple of feet in the air? Of course he was angry, everyone would instinctively defend them self in that kind of situation. He just wanted to get out, and found me non-threatening enough to give him a lift." 'Having basilisk scent all over you certainly helped with that.' he thought to himself.

They walked across school ground in a comfortable silence, Harry not even asking if they would like to pet the snake, seeing their frightened stares. When they were near Hagrids cabin, Harry placed the snake on the ground, hissing silently that if it found some time, there was a really old snake in the castle, who would appreciate some company, before they went back to the castle.

Late into the night, it would appear that Harry Potter was sleeping, but in fact he was visiting Salazar in his new home. As for founder of Hogwarts, home where he was living wasn't much. It looked like something similar to Hagrids cabin in a middle of a moor, that formed near the city when Slytherin settled in. Harry already hear the story that it was exact replica of the one Salazar grew in. "No place like home" he kept repeating.

"So, what is troubling you?" Slytherin asked when they were sitting at the table.

"Well, it was bugging me for some time, but today's duel reminded me. Why are all incantations in Latin?"

"Oh, I wouldn't say they're all in Latin." responded Salazar with slight chuckle. "But if you ask why there are incantations at all, it's because wands were designed that way. I don't really know that much about wand-making, but there is serious arithmetic behind them. Incantation is just stating your will, waving pattern is pointing your intent, like intended area or object, and there is just power behind the spell. At first in different countries, there were different incantations, depending on language in use. But as you now only Latin is in use, I would have to guess that there is some standard way to build wands, used everywhere, or just that most scrolls were written in Latin, so anybody wanting to learn, would have to use those."

"And what about wordless casting?"

"You can do it so it's possible. With wands... I don't really know how good it is to put more power and more concentration without that help from speaking out loud. More likely is that people enchant their things to do "default" action when with given command like single flick of a wand. Things like self washing pots, or self stirring cauldrons..."

"Enchanting?" Harry asked, interested in new subject.

"Maybe some other time, as it seems you're quite tired." said Salazar with a smile.

Harry didn't even had time to respond to that, before everything darkened, in the end going pitch black, as Harry finally fell asleep.

AN. Sorry for messy writing, but sometimes, ideas just don't want to stick to the page.

This is getting more and more boring, so this time I won't say that I'm not the owner of Harry Potter and it belongs to J. K. Rowling... Damn...

After that night, there were only couple of days before the End of Term. Harry again was one of those staying at Hogwarts over Christmas. He had too much work to do to be going anywhere, and essays that teachers assigned were only the start of it.

On the last day before most of the students went home, Harry was returning from library alone, Hermione and Neville busy with packing, when he noticed strangest Christmas decorations. From walls and ceiling of the corridor he was walking in, there were hanging all types of clothes, from shoes, through cloaks, shirts and skirts, ending with accessories like scarf's.

As peculiar that was, when he rounded the corner, there was something more intriguing. Rest of the corridor was decorated in similar fashion, but at the end of it, there was standing a little blond girl from Ravenclaw as her robes stated, staring with unblinking eyes at a pair of shoes hanging from the ceiling. Her wand was stuck behind her ear, as she didn't even attempt to levitate or otherwise move the things that Harry guessed were hers, hanging far beyond her reach. Next to her there could be seen couple of other girls, standing in a tight bunch and not even suppressing snorts of giggles at the lone girls trouble. Then the girl blinked, and moved her gaze right... past Harry?

Harry turned, following her gaze, and noticed Magie standing behind him. He once again looked at the girl, who now had her head tilted to one side, but still watching Magie with her unblinking, dreamy eyes. Harry once more looked at Magie, slightly shook his head, after which she vanished. When she was gone, the blonde girl blinked once more, straightened her head, and returned to just staring at the pair of shoes hanging from the ceiling.

"What? You noticed one of those Nargle's you keep..." Harry could make out from girls who were now laughing fully, before...

'She's a natural. Rowena would like her.'

Harry turned to the part of the corridor he came from, and there, leaning against the corner, out of sight of the young girl, stood Slytherin.

'What do you mean?' Harry asked switching his gaze to the girl.

'Like I told you, Rowena was connected to the wind. That it itself isn't quite peculiar, unless you mention that she was thinking like wind blows.' at Harry's confused look, Salazar continued. 'Air is everywhere, so wind can come from any direction. Most people have linear type of thinking. Even for most wizards of my time it was enough to find one connection that they needed to do a spell. Rowena on the other hand could instantly make connections to multiple possibilities from one starting point. She was best at research because when we had to try multiple times, changing approach until we got something right, she seemed to... juggle magic. She started doing something, and if it went wrong even so slightly, she just changed direction, just like with wind, and could steer to a desired ending. That's what I mean when I called that blond girl natural. Rowena was a natural at noticing spells, energy or other things. To her it was just like a breeze on her skin.'

'That would explain how she instantly noticed Magie. But why is she...' Harry left it hanging, watching the girl who was still just standing there.

'I've seen it only once in my entire life.' Salazar begun, with sadness in his eyes. 'Magical education, even in my times, started at certain stage of life. I don't know how they ended with eleven years old, but at first it was the time when child stopped daydreaming and asking for bedtimes stories, and started to ponder the world and ask for explanations. While most young wizards and witches went through that change relatively smoothly, slowly exchanging fairytale with what adults taught them, or even their own observations, there could happen something that would interrupt that process. The one case I saw, was a little child who lost its way in a forest. It returned after nearly two months, and after being asked what happened, it told how things that couldn't possibly exist helped it to survive by bringing food, creating shelter and such. After that, the child couldn't be persuaded that those things were representations of magic. There was no way to prove that they didn't exist, because the child would come up with a power those creations had, that would unable

us catching or even touching them.' Salazar finished with a tired shake of his head.

'To say simply. While you make distinction between what is real, and what only you can see, the blond girl standing there can't do that. She sees those two worlds as one, and can't tell one from other, because if there is a friction between the two, she would just bend the imaginary one, and her magic would make it true. I think that she can use a wand, like the child from my time could, since she don't acknowledge the connection between her and what her magic created.'

'Wait, then you mean I too could use a wand?' Harry asked in surprise.

'In theory, yes. But only if you stop treating Magie like you do now. You would have to...' Salazar wanted to continue, but was interrupted.

'No, thank you. I was just asking.' Harry said with a smile. 'But what about her?' he asked while pointedly looking at the young Ravenclaw. 'Is there a way to help her?'

'You could always try.' replied Salazar with a slight smile, before vanishing.

Harry stood there a while, pondering the girl and still chuckling group near her, group that still haven't noticed him, having too much fun as it was.

'Magie?' he called softly.

'Hmm?' came a reply, and he noticed her standing in the spot from which Slytherin vanished moments before.

'Sorry about earlier...'

'Nevermind it. I wasn't comfortable in the first place, you know, with her staring at me.' she answered with a smile.

'Could you give me something like...' he started, just to be interrupted again.

Magie just took a stuffed toy from behind her back. It was a slightly over-used plush dog.

'I might have forgot to constantly remind you how wonderful you are.' Harry said with a smile, making her blush slightly.

'Just remember to bring it back!' she mumbled loudly, blushing even deeper, as Harry started walking in the direction of Ravenclaws. Her comment just made him grin broadly.

"Hey! You there!" Harry yelled as he got near the end of corridor.

At that, the group of girls stopped everything they were doing, watching with scowls what this might be about. The blond girl just blinked, and switched her attention to him, staring with her dreamy eyes.

"I heard, you knew a thing or two about unknown species. My friend caught this one, and I was wondering if you knew what it was." Harry said, holding the toy-dog right in front of her.

"OH! You have Brown-bellied Woofminster. They're very rare." the girl exclaimed.

"Well, thanks for clearing that one out. I'm sorry that I can't leave it with you, but it's very important to my friend, and I said I would bring it right back."

"Shame. Daddy would like a picture or two for Quibbler. Have you read it before?"

"No, I haven't. I'm Harry by the way." he said, while extending his hand.

"Yes I know. I'm Luna."

They kept talking like that, with Luna petting the toy, both paying no attention to the group standing slightly to the side.

Girls in that group on the other hand were staring dumbfound as Harry Potter, THE Harry Potter, was talking with Luna Lovegood of all people, talking about something he was holding, but they couldn't see. Each and every one of them were wondering, but wouldn't

admit it, if there wasn't something wrong with their eyes. Too confused to even think, the girls left.

"You want some help with those?" Harry asked at one point, looking at the things still hanging all around the corridor.

"Well... If you could." Luna replied with a shrug.

'Magie, go fish!' Harry said, referring to the card game.

Magie just rolled her eyes, but already had a fishing pole, and even a fishing hat. She dismissed the fact that Luna was again staring at her, when she swung her pole and sent the hook flying towards nearest thing. But instead of stopping at that, the hook flew further, through other things, even those hanging around the corner of the corridor. When Magie at last felt that she "caught" everything, she rolled the line back, making all the things flying towards her.

"Did you know that you have around you a large bunch of..." Luna started.

"Luna, maybe we will talk about it after the break? You still need to pack, and I would rather read up on Quibbler than always ask you to explain everything."

"OK." she answered simply, gathered her things and went along her way.

'Now for Salazar to teach me enchanting.' Harry thought, cogs in his head turning.

With few students in the castle, and his school-work done in the early days of the break, Harry had lots of time to practice.

Enchanting wasn't anything like Harry thought it would be. There was no complex things to do, or exhausting yourself while feeding the energy for the enchantment to hold. It was once again changing your perception on things. Wand-less enchantment wasn't about making inanimate object act in any kind of way. It was opposite. Treating said object like it was already alive, merely in a deep sleep, staying motionless. Harry just had to imagine what that particular object would act like when it was awake, if it would bounce around,

sing, or anything else. And just like in any previous situation, where his determined mind wend, magic followed.

The only problem was to be precise, while not overcomplicating. Object that would be imprecise, would act in random ways, not really serving its purpose. That which had too many "commands" to follow, wouldn't do anything at all if it was placed in situation with two different orders to do at one time.

The trick was just like with the Sorting Hat. To give the object a personality of sorts. While beginners like Harry couldn't make anything as aforementioned Hat, he could manage a basic sort of "intelligence". While not smartest, it was enough for enchanted things to follow its given purpose on its own, without any additional help.

As for the power to sustain enchantment, it again was stupidly simple. Wand magic spells had to rely on power from the caster, or energy in ward stones, for the enchantment to continue. On the other hand energy in wandless magic mingled with energy already in the surrounding area, so as long as there was ambient magic, it could sustain itself quite nicely. At one point Harry wondered, if instead of enchanting, it was putting a little of real life in inanimate objects.

Gathering all those small things up, enchanting wasn't that hard at all. More than tricky at most. But with whole Christmas alone, Harry managed to do what he had in mind.

It was first feast after everyone got back, with everyone swapping stories of their Christmas. Everyone, except a single blond girl sitting at Ravenclaw table, picking slowly at her food.

Since there was high spirit, no one noticed a white blur flying into the Great Hall, making one round over the Ravenclaw table, and shooting out of just as quickly. All that was left in its wake, was a box in Christmas wrapping, suspended on a small parachute, gently floating in the air. As it begun to drop lower and lower, everyone started to pay attention to it. Everyone, except a single blond girl sitting at Ravenclaw table, picking slowly at her food.

The said girl blinked when the box finally settled right in front of her. Not paying any attention that almost everyone was looking in her direction, she reached out, and untied a bow on top of the box. As soon as she did that, the box fell apart, revealing strangest elephant-looking toy ever. There was a sign behind it saying "I'm sorry for being late." and another note, which it seemingly held with its trunk.

Luna reached and took the note, and jumped slightly when the creature sneezed, locked its eyes with hers, before doing couple of laps around her plate, and lying down to sleep in the place it started out from. The note said:

I know that it isn't the one you saw earlier, or even the real thing, and I'm sorry about that. But this one is entirely yours and no one will be able to take it away from you.

Everyone in the Great Hall looked at one another, not understanding what was happening. But Luna just turned, and looked across the confusion, straight at Harry, with disturbingly clear gaze and a slight smile playing on her lips.

At first Harry wasn't sure if he did everything right, but that was short lived, as some angry muttering could be heard from some Ravenclaws.

What Harry essentially did, was to make the strange elephant hide from everyone who meant it harm. Just like children playing hide and seek, it would cover its eyes when it would like to hide, but unlike with children, it actually couldn't be seen by the person it was hiding from.

So, while some Ravenclaws were growing more and more frustrated, being unable to take from Luna something she cared about, others were looking at them more strangely, while they were cursing about an object sitting right in front of them.

Returning to his contemplations about enchanting vs life giving, Harry had to smile at the idea that Luna now owned one and only "living" Shy-Flapping Sneezingle.

Disclaimer: Even though I live with my family, I don't think J. K. Rowling is still living with her parents...

AN. In response to people calling my writing messy, I looked for help. FinnickLover4ever was good enough to lend a hand. If my writing won't improve over next couple of chapters, don't think she isn't working hard. It will be just a proof that I'm helpless.

It was only couple of days later that Hogwarts returned to its normal course, which was why Harry was going to library. He was meeting there with Neville and Hermione, and their study schedule seemed to just be working over-hours to keep up with vast amount of work teachers threw at them after the holidays.

Harry headed straight for their usual table to leave his things, when he rounded a row of books just to notice that someone was already sitting there. And it was none other than Ron Weasley. He sat slumped over a book, leaning heavily on the table and holding his head in his hands. He looked like he was going to pull his hair, or just stopped doing that.

"Hello." Harry said cautiously, whilst stepping closer.

Ron jumped slightly and looked around to find whoever had spoken to him. After noticing it was only Harry, he mumbled a tired reply.

"Something I can do for you?" he asked sleepily after closing his book and rubbing his eyes. He looked like he hadn't slept in days, but it was probably doing the unusual task of reading that made him tired.

"I just wanted to ask how long you're going to study here. We usually use this table."

Ron looked around to who "we" meant, and scowled when he noticed a petite blonde staring at them with unblinking eyes.

"She's with you?" he asked with displeasure all over his flustered face.

Harry turned and saw that new addition to their study group arrived.

"Yes," he answered simply.

"But why?" Ron asked, still scowling.

When Harry turned his attention to the read-headed boy again, and saw his disapproval, he had to smile.

"Because she's immensely cute. I think about making her a Loser's Club's mascot..." Harry said, with a thoughtful look on his face. It was just too fun to mess with the youngest Weasley.

"Mascot? What club?" Ron gapped up at him, whilst exchanging glances between him and the blonde girl.

"Hmm?" Harry stopped his contemplations, and noticed in what state Ron was. "Oh, you meant Luna. I thought you were talking about Seizie." he said, while looking back at the toy elephant sleeping on top of Luna's head. "And Loser's Club is another story."

"Never mind," replied Ron, his thoughts on Luna's sanity and whatever answer he had to what Harry might have said about her long forgotten. Instead he just stared at Harry, who was still looking in curiosity at the toy elephant.

"You're a lot more different than what I thought you would be," Ron finally told him, after a while of contemplation and awkward silence.

"How so?" Harry asked, taking a seat at the table, and waving Luna to do the same. The blonde girl floated over slowly to their table, so he turned his attention back to the freckled boy.

"Well, with all those stories about Boy-Who-Lived, I thought you would be perfect in every sense and striding around school to show it of to everybody," he admitted.

"What? You thought I would pull a Malfoy?" Harry asked with a smile, at which Ron chuckled lightly, but his ears got red, showing that he really thought something similar.

"But like I said, you aren't like that. You study all the time. You're in the Gryffindor tower only when you're sleeping or grabbing additional books. At first I thought that it would be awesome to get on the team in the first year, like you did. But after I saw that

regardless of your age, Wood is making you go as hard, or even harder than others, and how tired you are after every training, I don't think I could make it. You're working so much that it isn't fun any more." he stopped, heaving a sigh. Harry opened his mouth to reply, but the other boy carried on.

"I, on the other hand, was busy just having fun all year, and now..." Ron commented, and his sentence faded to just another awkward silence. He looked tiredly again at the book that was still laying in front of him, quietly taunting both of them that they had to study.

"Who told you that work can't be fun?" Harry questioned, his brow furrowed.

Ron blinked twice before he answered, "But work is work, it isn't meant to be fun. It's just a general rule in life."

Harry just chuckled. "Then what about your brothers?"

Ron blinked again, like a doe faced with glowing headlights. "What about them?"

"I've heard that one is a Curse-breaker, and another is a Dragon-tamer. Muggle's think that those are things you only read in books, something interesting they only dream about doing. Tomb-riding or handling Dragons. And yet, you have brothers doing it all the time. Are they sometimes complaining how hard it is? I wouldn't be surprised if the did. But I bet that they could sit and have an never-ending streak of telling stories about something fun or interesting that happened while they were working." Ron's eyes widened as that was exactly what happened only couple of days earlier when whole family gathered for Christmas. Bill and Charlie telling stories so fantastic that their mother had to yell at them to go to bed, because they haven't noticed how late it was.

"Even look at the twins." Harry chuckled, bringing Ron out of his thoughts. "Even though everyone know they are behind every major prank, teachers can't do anything because there is no evidence that they've done anything. You think preparing things on such a large scale without getting caught is easy? Of course it isn't. And the more fun it is when prank works perfectly, first time." Harry thought for a moment, then added, "I also think that teachers don't mind since their pranks show that they're at least studying a bit." Harry

managed to amaze Ron the second time in just a five minute time span.

"What? Don't tell me you haven't noticed that their pranks are usually just a twist on material they're going through in class." He said, bewildered at the Weasley's silence.

Ron got a horrified look on his face. To him, thought of Twins doing homework in any way was just so wrong and revolting. Harry laughed to himself, while thinking about how much fun he had while learning. Of course, just a thought of his Mentor, a thousand year old basilisk, and "imaginary" friends, was enough to bring a smile to his face. He shook his head, and saw Ron sitting there, thinking hard.

"So, what do you like to do?"

"I like Quidditch," Ron said immediately, without even pausing to think about his answer.

"I haven't seen you in the try-outs," Harry wondered. Even if Wood was happy with the current squad, he always checked for new talents, and idea of a whole reserve team from last year allowed more spots.

"Yeah, that," he grumbled. "Because I was having fun all last year I barely passed any of my tests, and this time Mum said that I won't get anywhere near my broom if my grades don't improve."

Harry now understood from where Ron had that idea that work couldn't have anything in common with fun. It seemed that fun was reward for work well done as far as Mrs. Weasley was concerned.

"So, do you like anything else? Potions or something?"

Ron opened his mouth, just to close it again. He stared at Harry for couple of seconds and scowled. Harry just rolled his eyes.

"I saw you playing chess in common room a lot." he commented, rising his eyebrows just a little bit.

"Ahem. That's, er, that's just something to pass the time." Ron replied, not looking Harry directly in his piercing green eyes.

"I also heard that no one was able to beat you so far."

"Yeah... so? Doesn't mean I'm that good. Have you seen the others play? It's like watching a dragon trying to ice- skate, I swear."

Harry shook his head at the dragon comment. He had to smile at the thought that he started talking to others just like Slytherin had him solve problems.

"You know how people say Twins only fool around. But would you say they're good at it?"

"Sure. Fred and George are best at fooling around." Ron smiled at the memories of some pranks they made, and grimaced while remembering some fun at his expense. "But what about it?"

"How much do you think Zonko's would pay for their ideas?"

That was enough for Ron to understand what Harry was talking about. "But there is no job in playing chess." he said with a frown.

"Well, I don't think there is in Magical community. But in muggle world there are chess tournaments. I don't know exact exchange rate, but lets say that first place is something like..." Harry did a quick calculation, as to not overdo-it. "Four thousand galleons."

Ron's jaw hit the floor the exact moment he heard that.

"FOUR THOUSAND!" he exclaimed, bringing Madam Pince's fierce glare and venomous "Shh!" on them.

"Four thousand galleons for playing chess?" Ron whispered again, astonished, after they ducked their heads out of view of the librarian.

"Well, only in biggest tournaments held only once a year, but yeah. Beside that, there are smaller ones throughout the year."

"Where do you get that kind of money from?" Ron asked, still not believing.

"Well, I think that part is from people entering, and part is from tickets sold." Harry replied, not really knowing how chess tournaments worked.

"Wait, you tell me people come to see someone play chess?"

"You wouldn't believe what people want to watch. Here there's only Quidditch, but in muggle world there is something called Olympics. There are many individual competitions like swimming, jumping, running..."

"Wait, you say that people buy tickets to watch someone run around? And you get money for it?"

Harry chuckled. "Well you can think it's not that hard, but try jumping above 2 meters in the air... without any magic." he remember to add. "And I don't think people watch Olympics to watch other people "just" running around. It is about people running, swimming or doing anything else really well. I think there is a sort of fetish around the world, concerning doing everything perfect. Not only in sports but in every part of life. If someone does something extremely well, he is sure to be acknowledged." Harry said, not wanting to explain some of the Guinness World Records to a magical person.

"So, getting back to chess." Ron said impatiently, steering conversation to the original topic, because he was getting confused by the muggle world. "You think I should concentrate only on playing?"

"Oh, I wouldn't say that. You know, it was a muggle author by the name of Robert A. Heinlein who I believe put it best. He said 'A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyse a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, and lastly die gallantly. Specialization is for insects.'. Like I said before, there is a sort of fetish with doing something perfectly. If you do that, you end up doing only one thing repeatedly, and if that don't work in life, you end up with nothing. The only way you could manage on doing one thing, is if you were best in the world. Like you said you play chess to pass the time. But what if you meet someone who you couldn't win against? Would you just say "I

won't play with you any more because it's no fun.". Or would you work harder, and play more with that person until you beat him?"

"So we're back to working hard on it?" Ron groaned, slumping back in his seat with a defeated look on his freckled face.

"Well, chess is just an example, but when you're having fun with what you do, you won't even notice the work you've done."

"Why are you constantly saying that work is fun?" A red eyebrow was raised in disbelief.

"Anything can be fun. Sure it will stay hard work if you want it to be hard, but there is always something you can do to add that fun part into it. And if something you're working on, or learning, or just doing, in the end won't be useful, instead of ending with nothing, you at least have fun time behind of you. And you have to admit that you can't constantly run away from work. Because... Do you know how you call constant work and striving to be better than you are now?"

"No. What do you call that?"

"Life," Harry answered with a smile. Ron just shook his head.

"I changed my mind. You're not just a lot more different than I expected; you're nothing like I thought you would be."

Before any of them could add anything else, there was sound of footsteps coming their way.

"Sorry we're late, there was..." Hermione begun but stopped abruptly, and took the scene before her, with Neville nearly running into her.

At their usual study table, there was Harry, talking with Ron Weasley. Slightly to the side of them, Luna Lovegood was sitting with her head on the table and her elephant under her arm, having fallen asleep while half listening to their conversation.

"Hi." she said in the end.

"Hi." Ron replied, slightly uncomfortable.

Luckily Harry took over, breaking the awkward silence that followed, for the third time that day.

"Ron is having some trouble with his homework. Do you mind if he joins our study group?" Harry asked the new arrivals, and when Hermione looked at him, he just winked.

"No, of course not." she said with a smile, placed her things in a seat between Harry and Luna, and went with Neville to gather the other countless books to prepare for their study time. Ron just nodded at Harry in thanks, while the raven-haired-boy was waking the blonde girl, who mumbled something about Nargles in her sleep.

After that, they went to work, explaining how they spent their time and what they were working on to both Luna and Ron. From the start Ron instinctively knew that no one would do his homework for him. He would actually have to really try and work this year.

A/N. I don't know how Chess tournaments work, just looked random prize from first page I found on Google. Nor have I read any work by Robert A. Heinlein (at least I don't think I had). It was a quote I had in my notes. You have to get used to my picking snippets of information and twisting it to my liking. Sorry.

As for Ron. In canon from the start he had Hermione standing over him, and as much he didn't liked that, he at least studied. I gave him a year and a half on his own. He wouldn't have dropped out in that time, since Crabbe and Goyle passed (though I think their family gold have something to do with their education) but "barely passed" I think is enough to set Molly on alarm.

I'm running out of ideas... Erm... Since I'm running out of ideas I can't possibly be J. K. Rowling since she's too creative to find herself in that kind of situation. Is that enough? Please tell me that's enough...

AN. I've got myself a chameleon Beta. Now her user-name is Enjoyeverymoment, and since she's so good at hiding, keep guessing what she changed...

Working on regular basis was something Ron wasn't familiar with. As far as chores went, with seven siblings in the family there wasn't much to do, even when everyone except his younger sister went to school as their parents took care of tasks that were left undone. Magic didn't really help with making your life harder.

But as Harry had repeatedly told him, work could be fun. As for a study group, it was too bizarre to be tiring. Hermione was the main researcher of the group. She could read through all reading material in a flash, and prepare a mini-lecture about current topic a second later. Neville was the one asking all of the obvious questions. They didn't disturb their learning, in fact helped them to hammer into their heads basics of new magical theory, or draw connections to the ones they previously learned. Harry would take the middle ground between hard to understand book language, and over simplified answers. He was best at taking a problem, and showing that nothing was just a theory, but, by pointing to practical applications, he gave you something you could touch, see, or just simply wrap your mind around, in place of usual book jargon. When they finished, they had a frame for simple essay, supported by actual theory which all of them understood, with lots of examples to back it up. All that was left, was to fill in the words, and each of them ended with their own, unique, rendition of the above. As schematic as it sounds, there were too many funny situations to call it a routine way of studying.

The very first evening Ron joined the group, they were discussing Bubble-producing spell, which Professor Flitwick used the year before to decorate Christmas trees. While results were quite impressive, it was quite simple, and a perfect example to start theory of spells that would lead up to Bubble-head charm. Neville was stuck, not understanding theory allowing caster to change the colour of the bubbles. Hermione tried, and tried again to explain rainbows or crystals, and that magic in the bubble just allowed it to stay in one particular colour, instead of couple swimming on its surface. Of

course, that just made Neville ask more about muggle physics, and Hermione explaining more things unrelated to magic, until Harry stepped in.

"Just think about different coloured balloons. If you blow it bigger, the colour is fainter. Here you just twirl your wand, exact shade is something you have to practice I think. And to choose the colour, you have this jab at the end." he said pointing to the wand movement pattern sketched in the book, and told about a circle muggles used to arrange colours in place of the previous circular wand movement.

Look of dawning realisation on Neville's face and Hermione's exasperated "Couldn't you have said that five minutes ago?" and frustrated expression were priceless. Adding Luna Lovegood to the equation just made it a whole more comical. And even though Ron was still sure he would never understand her, he was happy that she was there. He had a lot of things from first year to re-learn, which he probably wouldn't pay attention to if he was left to work on it alone.

Just sitting there and listening to Hermione, Harry and Neville working, made Ron understand, or at least pay attention, more than he had to any lecture. So, yes, he thought at the end of that particular session. Work can be at least a bit entertaining, even in the most unexpected ways...

It seemed that Gilderoy Lockhart wasn't done with trying to again built up his reputation in Hogwarts. Oh no, he was far from finished. This time though, he chose an approach as far from violence as he could, as bruising from Duelling club prevented him from looking good. Or to be exact, striking a pose whenever he wanted to without wincing. His aim this time was Love, and what better day for it than Valentine's Day. In his over-zealous strive to further his cause, he didn't quite notice what the grumpy dwarfs he had dressed in cupids "uniforms" actually looked like. Everyone else in the school knew at first glance that they looked more grotesque than amorous, and didn't quite help Lockhart to achieve his goal

Nearly every student shook their head at the whole notion, and those who at first were thrilled by a possibility of Valentine Cards, changed their mind when they saw dwarfs walking around in their costumes. They always seemed to be muttering something about "that dim-witted pansy boy", while pulling white sheets of their

uniform out of their ass. Not quite so romantic of a sight, and not one you would like your love interest see as the messenger of your valentine.

In the end, there weren't many cards sent that day, with dwarfs moping around the castle, growling at whoever looked in their direction, thus ending ideas of a delivery request before they even formed in the possible sender's head. It would probably be "none cards sent that day", if not for Harry thinking of a perfect way to use such a jolly bunch of messengers. Well, perfect for the students at least...

Minerva McGonagall was in a middle of lecture, when door to her class burst open to reveal one of "cupids" Gilderoy brought to the castle. Never a person to be interrupted, and especially by someone now walking to the front of the class, she narrowed her eyes at the dwarf, her lips getting so thin, that they were nearly non-existent.

"Can I help you?" she asked curtly.

"I have a singing valentine for Professor McGonagall." the little man said.

Minerva, closed her eyes, shook her head, and after she noticed that the creature in front of her haven't disappeared, she heaved a deep sigh.

"All right. Let me hear it," she said in a defeated voice, pinching the bridge of her nose.

"Cupid" nodded and started to sing.

"Transfiguration Mistress, Madam of Change

You won't alter my mind, don't think it strange

No incantations will keep me away, even if you shout or howl

Or just charm your face into permanent scowl,"

The dwarf sang with a hesitant glance at the Professor at every new line.

If their costumes were out of place, their singing voice could only follow the pattern. It wasn't everyday that you were serenaded with a voice fitting a sobering drunk, breaking every second note. When the song was half way through, Minverva scowled, just for her eyes to widen at the last line.

"Is that all?" she asked, eyebrow raised.

Dwarf grumbled, nodded, and made his way back to the door. She just shook her head again, turning to her notes, presumably to check where she was interrupted. She was, however, hiding a slight smile that was tugging at the corner of her lips, not listening to the snickers from the students in her Transfiguration class.

In another part of the castle, similar encounter took place, this time with Professor Sprout as the recipient of a singing valentine. Dwarf delivering the message put an extra effort in his performance, since as he looked at the woman, she could easily throw him out of the open window if she didn't like it. And plus, some of those plants looked ready to eat him alive. He cleared his throat and begun.

"Oh Flower Lady, grow me a plant

Take care of it, don't yell or rant

Be gentle with it, make it beautiful, make it glow

Use your skills so our plant named love will grow."

After dwarf finished, he looked uncertainly at the woman standing in front of him, not knowing if he should try to escape or take cover. Finally Professor Sprout blinked owlshly, an started to giggle. The fit of giggles that followed went on long after the dwarf made its way to the castle, and far away from the hysterical woman.

Of course not everyone that received the singing valentine, took it so well. Taking for instance Severus Snape. He was definitely not having a good day. In fact, he wasn't having a good year if you asked him and he was so restrained as to answer you truthfully instead of biting your head off, which he looked close to on numerous occasions.

It all started the previous year with the Potter brat. He came into Potions Master's dominion all jolly and smiling, taunting him from the very first minute. Oh how he wanted to wipe that pleased smile from that wimp's face. He tried, and tried... and in the end Potter ended on top of it. That impudent child probably could do anything he wanted, and everyone would buy it. Fame-hungry self-centred manipulating-others-pity-so-he-can-do-whatever-he-want-to fiend. Just as arrogant as his father.

But this year Potter whelp was the least of his problems. Every other dunderhead in the school learned to imitate oh-so-great Boy-who-lived. Now he had classes filled with students who were... respectful. Bah! Just thinking about it made him cringe, and if he even tried to speak the words he would immediately gag. He couldn't possibly say a word about their misbehaviour, since they were behaving. He had to actually teach classes full of students following his every move.

And now that caricature of a cupid was in his class and refused to leave before it delivered its valentine. Potions Master's hand was inching for his wand when he remembered that he was still in a class full of students, also known as - possible witnesses. Maybe if he memory-charmed everyone... To much work. Or it could be solved with one well placed area-affecting curse... But what to do with the bodies.

"Get on with it!" Snape growled in the end. The cupid eyed Professor in front of him suspiciously, but sung eventually:

"Potions Master, you're best one to fix a drink

I want to shimmy with you, more and more as I think

I don't care about your bat-like shape, or the air of fright

In fact, it's best to get jiggy with it in the middle of the night."

After dwarf finished, he eyed the dark man again, and run as fast as he could on his short legs. The first clue was that muscles near Snape's right eye spasm in a distinctive nervous tick. Second was the fact his wand was only a centimetre away from his hand. The third, and probably most noticeable one, was the noise of teeth

being grit on the brink of breaking. Oh no. Severus Snape was definitely not having a good day.

By the end of the day every teacher in the castle received a singing valentine. Even Headmaster had to listen to his, being tackled to the ground by a dwarf who was waiting, hidden behind one of the statues in front of his office. No one really knew what his valentine sounded like, but for a whole day he was stuck in a cycle of frowning, muttering to himself, and shaking his head.

The worst case of singing valentine, because it was one affecting nearly everyone in the castle, was the one sent to Sybill Trelawney. The dwarf at first was looking around the castle for her, then went for her classroom, but after getting half way up the tower, he was so tired that he thought he will simply wait for her to come down. Since she never left her tower, and the cupid was compelled to deliver the message, he could be heard by everyone while serenading her from underneath her tower. No one really appreciated hearing,

"Oh we can live so happily, just reading the stars

I know it will be wonderful, I have crystal balls."

Especially when they had only just woken up.

The next day, even a person so deluded about reality he was living in as Gilderoy Lockhart was, couldn't miss the venomous glares from sleep deprived students, and irritated teachers. He was starting to think that organising Valentines Day wasn't such a bright idea. Maybe Easter would hold something better in store for him...Now only to find a gigantic bunny.

AN. In response to people saying my writing isn't so messy. It's not about the final result, but about how I get there, and it's comment from my teachers. First I throw words on paper, blink, and try to put them in order which would resemble the initial thought. So, enjoy the final result, and... just don't come near my room when I'm working because you could get hit with something heavy...

I don't really care. Sometimes I write just for a laugh. So I can't be prestigious author that J. K. Rowling is. Though, I think I can come up with a pun in a minute or two...

AN. You might want to thank Enjoyeverymoment for getting your... eyes, on this chapter so fast. I was on a 7 hour writing-spree and suddenly remembered that there is something called food somewhere in the world. Seriously, go and thank her. I mean, like right now. Don't be lazy, it's just two klick's away...

By now, there was something of a tradition when it came to the Weasley Twin's birthday, and that was the reason why a group of people was hiding in a darkened room near corridor Twins walked at that particular time of the day. There were couple with their ear against the door, couple more deeper in the room shushing anyone who was squirming anxiously. No. That group wasn't hiding in fear of being pranked by the Twins on their birthday, that particular day always highlighted by something special from their repertoire. No, they were the surprise birthday party, though by now everyone should have got used to the idea that you couldn't surprise Twins with one of those.

Suddenly, people by the door whispered that someone is coming, but as the sound got nearer, there was something strange mixed with the footsteps. Squeaking. They didn't know from what it could come from, but there was no denying that there was that steady squeak-squeak-squeaking rhythm reverberating through otherwise empty corridor. Not wanting to spoil the surprise, but still too curious not to look, people by the door opened it just a crack, and saw something not seen before in the castle, which was telling a lot if you remember that it was Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Wheelchairs. There were two people in white uniforms pushing wheelchairs through the corridor, but more importantly for people inside the room, two identical redheads sitting in them.

"What's going on?" asked Lee Jordan, person keeping watch by the door thus first to exit the room.

Harry and Neville, dressed in their white uniforms, stopped and turned. Of course, wheelchairs which they were pushing turned with them, revealing Twins with goofy grins plastered on their faces, just

staring off in space. Kind of strange combination as they were sitting in front of a blank piece of wall.

"We're just taking them to the grounds. You know, to let them watch the view and get some fresh air." answered Harry, just as people came streaming out of the room.

"But... what happened?" asked Angelina, watching the scene unfold with wide eyes.

"Well, we were in infirmary getting something for a cold, and Twins already were there. Madam Pomfrey told us that they usually did something... drastic, like she called it, on their birthday. And to unable them trying this year, they got a dose of really strong calming draught. You see the effects," Harry commented, gesturing towards the Twins with their goofy expressions and hollow eyes.

"But they didn't do anything last year!" exclaimed Alicia, not believing what she was seeing.

"Yeah, but you remember what they did two years ago?" asked someone from the back of the crowd, whom Harry didn't know. Some in the crowd were nodding in acknowledgement.

"Wait, was that the one in the middle of the Great Hall..." someone else began, not fully knowing which year they were talking about.

"Yes, and those first year Slytherin's just..." another person went on to clarify.

"Stop!" shouted Katie, with nausea written all over her face. She wasn't the only one, as there was a massive round of shudders going through the crowd at the recollection of..that.

Harry and Neville shrugged, told everyone that they had to get going, and went on whilst everyone continued nodding sadly. When Twins would go back to their room that evening, they would notice that that pity story gave them best haul of presents ever. They would notice it only in the evening, as right now they were too busy working.

Even if Fred and George Weasley's weren't the most ambitious pair in the world, they still liked a little challenge from time to time. That was why they did something special each year at their birthday, to

always be sure they're in top shape. Of course, they might have overdid it with that...but last year they got too distracted with open season on "Snape hunting" to really prepare anything special for that year.

This year they had certain plans, but after Harry's stunt with valentine card's they had to change their plans on the spot. That's why they asked him to drive a pair of transfigured dummies around the school, telling him that it was the prank. In fact, it was only a pre-prank prank, as they needed time to stock up and prepare for the main event.

Yes, Weasley Twins certainly did enjoy a challenge from time to time, and even if Harry didn't know about it, he was the main opponent in their little pranking contest. But this time, they were aiming for something really, really... BIG.

Easter. Time of celebration, a time to come together, a time of joyous and hyper children running around every household and school in the country, or in the world. It's time when little children dream of the Easter bunny coming to give them edible energy and hyperness, and older children dreamt to simply experience that sweet sugar-high again, whilst skipping the bunny part. Yes, despite religious beliefs and grandparent's views, Easter was mainly about...chocolate. It comes in all shapes and sizes, and can be eaten in every meal in some form. In fact, no matter what anyone tries to tell you, it is chocolate that sits on top of every food chain, and Easter is a time where food really matters.

Albus Dumbledore thought that in such a joyous time, there simply could be no major problem which would spoil the day. He was proven wrong just a couple of seconds later when wards started screaming bloody murder over an intrusion on Hogwarts grounds. While normally they would simply notify him of a visitor entering the grounds, every instance of big appearance which was previously unannounced, by default was treated as an attack.

Headmaster of Hogwarts jumped out of his bed, putting his fluffy bunny slippers out of habit, as to avoid coldness of the floor, and ran up to the window. He scanned the grounds and his gaze stopped when it reached the lake. He couldn't make out exactly what it was, but there was something in the water of the lake, struggling to break through the surface. It wasn't simply big. It was gigantic. Also he

noticed a small group right in front of the castle gate, marching in a tight formation.

If his school was truly under attack, he was bound to protect it. With that thought of duty, Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts, Grand Sorcerer, Supreme Mugwump, owner of Order of Merlin – First Class, rushed into his dressing room for something more suitable for battle than his nightgown and fluffy bunny slippers with fluffy white tails, secretly made of cotton wool.

Insanity is said to be doing the same thing over and over again, while expecting different results. Taking into account that wizards weren't most logical type of people, it isn't sure if what Gilderoy Lockhart was doing could still be considered normal. However, where many witches and wizards might have at least stopped to consider their current course of action, he kept going, unwaveringly.

He had this idea to organise a unforgettable event. First Duelling Club, then Valentine's Day, now Easter, and nothing could stop him from achieving his goal. Of course, for his Easter, he had to find a very distinctive bunny. After contacting many Magizoologist's, he came to the conclusion that there wasn't an magical equivalent of bunnies, no matter the scale. Good enough that specialists he was talking with were knowledgeable enough to know that ostrich wasn't "just the thing he needed".

So, on Easter day it was again to dwarfs in costumes, of course, that were again going to be travelling the halls of Hogwarts. Someone in one of many London's costume shop was wondering why anyone would need so many children sized Bugs Bunny suits.

At first, Gilderoy had the thought to make dwarfs bunny-hop around, just to add that little something to their character. That was short lived as he noticed glares the dwarfs were sending his way. It was strange, seeing something which was most commonly labelled as "cute" sending information more along the lines "If you will make me hop, I'll hop on top of you until you die.". His ability to notice those kind of things got better when his delusions of grandeur, changed into more paranoid approach to life, given all the hateful looks he received nowadays. Though, you can't say you're paranoid if there really are people who would like to kill you.

So it was simply marching his bunny-squad to Hogwarts, and again, it didn't go as planned. Right when he was about to enter the battle, dwarf grumbling right behind his back, there was a sound of running water. He stopped, looking around in search of rain or even a strange fountain that sprouted from the castle wall in the middle of the night. Whatever he was looking for, he didn't predict what he saw when he turned around.

There was a gigantic bunny's head peeking from the lake. It was statement how shocked he was that he could think head larger than Hogwarts gates, was simply "peeking" out of the leak. He stood there, dumbfounded, as more and more of the bunny came out of the water, and when it's whole silhouette was visible, there was a small quake accompanying every step the bunny took, stepping only on it's hind-legs, holding an egg in it's front paws. Even if the whole thing was just a charmed balloon, currently missing a big parade, it still had its weight, especially without any gas inside to make it lighter. Knowing that little fact would certainly explain Twins question of "How muggles made those thing fly?".

That low rumbling repeated every time bunny took, reverberated throughout the castle better than any warning horn on the grounds. Anyone walking couple of streets from a discotheque, knew what a decent sub-woofer could do. In response to that, people came streaming out of the castle, the first ones to come out still wearing their pyjamas some with bathrobes on, as they were quick enough to grab them, stopping in shock on the steps of the castle, not even noticing Lockhart's group.

When Harry and his friends came, he took only one glance at the bunny which was now just standing there, swaying with the wind, before he whispered couple of words to Hermione, and going back to the castle with Neville in tow. Bushy haired girl was left with Luna, which wide unblinking eye's were so fitting in this setting, as many others had the same look on their face, and again, couple of words were exchanged between the two.

More people came, pushing those in front forward, as to make place for people straining their necks from the Entrance Hall. But whoever came out, stopped abruptly like he was smacked with a tuna, when he noticed what was waiting outside. Of course, he would be pushed forwards moments later, by another person, just for the events to

repeat themselves. Whoever was outside was simply speechless, no matter how long he was staring at the bunny. Of course until...

"It's going to squash us!" exclaimed Luna hiding behind her friend, when wind pushed the bunny forward in a "threatening" way. It almost looked like the bunny was watching the ant sized crowd with its wickedly grinning face.

"There is only one thing we can do now," responded Hermione, patting Luna on the back reassuringly.

"What is it!", "Please, tell us!" exclaimed the Twins. They were all for it, if Harry was right now preparing for a prank of his own.

"We can only run from side to side, looking completely helpless," she answered their pleas with a knowing look, just to start running the next second, Luna right by her side. Of course, seconds later, Twins also gave chase.

It spooked everyone when people started to run, so of course, everyone else started to run away too, with that basic "get to safety" instinct. They didn't even notice that they were following a person who, when getting to certain point, would just switch direction they were running to. Person who said "If you can sit calmly when everyone around you panic, it might be that you simply don't understand the problem." probably didn't know that it wasn't a great deal of trouble to start random fit of chaos.

And that was what Albus Dumbledore saw when he appeared on the scene in his best battle gear, the combination of colours which could be straight from a bad drugs-infused dream were probably for distraction. He saw the grounds in chaos, panicking students were running about, though had that silly impression that a couple of them were just playing a game of tag. Only after that he really took notice of a gigantic bunny, making the background of the scene.

Looking a little closer, he saw Lockhart and his bunch, forgotten in the middle of confusion.

"Gilderoy," he begun as he approached the man "I understand that fun is important to students, to help them relieve anxiety from hard studying, and I know you try your best, but you have to at least notify other teachers about it. There would be a lot less trouble if we could

prepare for all the festivities," the Headmaster said sternly as Lockhart and his small army of mini-bunnies turned to face him.

"Headmaster... I...I mean... This..." Gilderoy stammered, at first not even recognising that someone was talking to him, and later how to explain that it wasn't his fault, all this insanity with people tripping over each other.

"Oh, there is no need to apologise, no harms done." Albus responded with knowing smile "All we need to do is to calm down students. Thought getting rid of it might be a little troublesome." he continued, eyeing the bunny. "But, since you were able to get it here, I don't predict any trouble."

This time, Gilderoy didn't even had any time to start explaining that it wasn't him, because a sound of quick footsteps coming from the castle caught their attention. Whoever wasn't in the horde of students running in random patterns, meaning few teachers who weren't right now checking security in other parts of the castle, watched as person dressed in black run from the castle, greasy hair swaying as he sped to the group, with his cloak billowing behind him with every step he took.

The man stopped at the top of the stairs, striking a pose which made Lockhart jealous, hands on his hips, chin high, eyes cast off to the distance.

"Someone called for help! I came as soon as I could!" the figure exclaimed.

"Mr. Potter?" asked Professor McGonagall, first one to find her voice among the gob-smacked group. There stood Harry Potter, his glassed slipping slightly off of his nose.

Harry broke his pose, tearing his eyes from the horizon to scan the situation, seemingly only now noticing the gigantic bunny overshadowing the castle.

"OH NO! It's Bunny-dzilla!" he shouted in fright. "What to do? What to do?" he kept repeating while furiously scratching his chin. "Quickly Robin, to the Bat-mobile! We need to go to the Bat-cave for more supplies!" he called to the air behind him. At this point, all his shouting caught everyone's attention, and students running a while

ago now were rooted to the ground, just as bewildered as the teachers were.

Moments after his call, another figure run out of castle, this ones robes green with accents of silver, though the same greasy hair hanging from his head.

"I don't think we have time for that. The monster can attack any second now." Neville said after he stood side by side with Harry, both of them with fists on their hips, watching the bunny for any suspicious or threatening move.

"You're right, we must fight this horrid beast with what we have." Harry/Batman announced while running in the direction of their enemy, Neville/Robin joining him just a second later.

Group of students that was standing between the castle gates and the bunny split in half, letting them through. Their initial shock gave way to the comedy of the situation, and soon they were howling with laughter, some rolling on the ground, watching as Harry and Neville dressed in their costumes battled the hideous monster that assaulted their school. Of course all that they really did was to punch and kick the rubber toy, with their attack practically bouncing right back at them, doing crazy rolls and dodges to avoid attacks that never came. All this time Bunny-dzilla was just standing there, swaying with the wind, still having that goofy grin all over its face.

"I don't think it's working, Harry... I mean Batman," said Neville, slightly panting from the workout. He kicked the monster again feebly, and his shoe just bounced of the fluffy surface.

"You're right. I think I might need to use my secret weapon." Harry responded, at which his sidekick gasped, covering his mouth with his trembling hands.

"Please, no! Not the Killing blow!" Neville pleaded with horrified look on his face, his words slightly muffled because his hands were still over his face.

"It's the only way." Harry said sadly, shaking his head.

"Take cover! Everyone! Run for your lives!" Neville started shouting, running just as helplessly as everyone were just minutes ago.

Of course that only made everyone stop laughing and pay more attention. Many coming closer to see better, in spite of Neville's shouts. Harry, who was standing right in front of his enemy, closed his eyes in concentration. Seconds later his face begun to change. He would cringe, frown, grimace, everything in between and much more, but when he opened his eyes again, there was a massive intake of breath, as anyone could see exact replica of their own Potions Master's sneer at its prime. Even that hateful look was pitch perfect.

Then, happened something that no one had thought possible. In the exact moment Harry sneered at the bunny, it was blasted away. Of course no one possibly could notice Magie poking the bunny with oversized pin. Harry relaxed, returning his face to normal, while Neville returned to his side. They again struck a pose fitting valiant heroes who just beat their mortal enemy, with said fiend flying off to the distance. Of course, the overall effect was spoiled by that farting noise every balloon did when air was running out of it, provided by Magie.

"Our work is done. Let us make our exit, Robin," Harry called out to Neville after Bunny-dzilla was at last gone.

He threw something on the ground, making a big dust cloud cover him and Neville. Of course, it would be more impressive if they couldn't be seen sneaking to the side of the roughly twenty feet wide smoke screen and coughing slightly. On their way to the castle, they grabbed a fair maiden each, namely Hermione and Luna, with Twins running behind them shouting "Our heroes!" along the way. Everyone who wasn't again howling with laughter, just stood there helplessly. Because seriously, what could be done after you saw THAT.

Safe inside the castle walls, six friends collapsed on the stone-floor, at last letting their own laughter to fill the air. Weasley Twins weren't that ambitious, and they had no problem with acknowledging that Harry won the round... again.

Just couple weeks later, there was Gryffindor vs. Hufflepuff game scheduled, though, everyone was still talking about what happened on Easter, which infuriated the Potions Master to no end. No one wanted to tell him the whole story, but couple of days later braver

students would shout "Our hero!" whenever they saw him, or even ask him to sign some Easter postcards. Each encounter annoyed him all on its own, but it was maddening for him to not understand what obviously everyone else knew.

On the game day, it lessened somehow, because everyone was wondering why Lucious Malfoy was attending the game. His story was that he had some Governor board notions to discuss with Dumbledore, and only free moment he could find was during the game. In fact, he was worried what happened to the precious diary his Master left in his care, before thus far, there was nothing that showed that it made it's way to the castle. In fact, it was like it vanished entirely the day it left his care. He prayed for an occasion to investigate, taking opportunity in distracted students, minding only the game, to get some answers. He ended forgetting about that, over the course of the game.

In fact, everyone paid more attention to the game, than they expected they would. As far as Hufflepuffs went for friendship and fair play, competition is competition. For the whole game, every second bludger was sent at Harry, something they learned from Gryffindor vs. Slytherin game. Even as Harry spotted snitch pretty early into the game, all the dodges he made unable him to go straight for it, some of them being really close. In all the game madness and his dodge-frenzy, none of the players probably noticed that one of the bludgers hit Malfoy, rendering him unconscious as he was unable to move out of the way while sitting between two mountains of flesh, also named Crabbe and Goyle.

Harry caught the snitch in the end, urged by the thought that he couldn't last long if he didn't, but when he landed, he hissed, pain coursing through his leg. He checked it quickly, and saw that it was only abrasion from the bludger that grazed his leg. Still, he had to take off his boot and sock as not to aggravate the skin further, now that he was on ground and actually had to use his foot. He stood there, leaning on his broom, waiting for Madam Pomfrey to come and help him with her remedies, when Malfoy senior came on his back.

"Mr. Potter, I will not stand you mocking my family at your every step," he snarled at Harry, his teeth clenched in anger.

"Mocking? Like how?" Harry asked confused, still not knowing that Draco had to be taken to the infirmary, and that's why he had to wait so long for Madam Pomfrey's help.

But, while he asked, he flipped his hands in that distinctive "Could you explain further?" gesture. Unfortunately, it was the hand in which he was holding his sock with, and it sailed through the air, ending on top of Lucius head, and partly covering his right eye. Malfoy senior certainly didn't appreciate the smelly sweat-soaked sock hanging over his face, and so he picked it up using his thumb and forefinger to do so. He turned his head slightly with disgusted look, like what he was holding was nothing less than toxic waste, proceeded to drop the sock to the ground. Chain of events reaching it's end, the sock stopped its fall in the hand of house-elf named Dobby. He had come as soon as he had felt his master's distress, and after appearing raised his hand to snap his fingers and do his job - returning his master to perfect order.

Dobby looked at the sock in his hand, and without even saying a word, vanished with a soft pop, entirely free. Lucius Malfoy, after noticing what just happened, changed his facial expression from disgusted to one fitting a rabid dog who had just...well, had just got attacked with a sock and had his house elf set free by no one but Harry meddling Potter.

"Have I done something wrong?" Harry asked, playing dumb. Somehow, that didn't help soothe Malfoy senior's anger, and only the Headmaster's intervention stopped the string of curses no student should ever hear. Because that was all he could do in a middle of a stadium filled with spectators. Swear profusely.

AN. Something alike of a crack chapter, mainly the quidditch game, since I had no other idea for freeing Dobby.

"Place your disclaimer here". I'm too tired of telling you time and time again that I don't own Harry Potter to come up with another original way to say it.

AN. Thanks for this chapter being nearly twice as long than what it was should be directed to Enjoyeverymoment.

Many in the school were just waiting for another "show", but it wasn't until a week had passed that something of interest happened. It was this long because Draco was forced to stay in infirmary until the slight concussion he acquired from the last encounter with bludger, was treated fully. Then he just couldn't believe what transpired after he was taken to the hospital wing. When at last the message got through, he just had to get some revenge.

That was why he made his way to the Gryffindor table just as soon as he noticed Harry enter the Great Hall for the morning breakfast. He smiled evilly to himself, and sauntered over towards the table where gold and red clad people were sitting.

"You probably are proud of yourself, Scarhead," he begun, standing right behind the raven-haired boy. Everyone in hearing distance stopped to watch the encounter. "I always wondered what Gryffindors did in their free time. Is theft just some kind of hobby of yours? Or is it more house wide?" Draco stared at the boy, met by a few cheers from his own house and a few quiet jeers from others.

As much Gryffindors that heard that wanted to interfere, at this point they knew that Harry could take care of himself. So, they waited for his response. They waited, waited, and waited some more, for a reply that never came. All that Harry did was to eat his breakfast like there was nothing more going on, like his worst enemy wasn't standing behind him, trading insults with a brick wall, as it seemed.

"Not going to respond? Afraid of spilling some trade secrets?" Malfoy probed at him, his sneer leering ever closer.

Again nothing. Harry just sat there munching on his porridge, staring indecisively at the pot of yoghurt on his plate, wondering whether or not he wanted it or the apple sitting beside it. He put down his spoon, and reached for the strawberry yoghurt pot.

"You can't just sit there ignoring me!" Draco said more forcefully.

Harry's response was to slurp his juice. He was simply looking at the cinnamon danish sitting in front of him, which reminded him of a hat Luna had once worn. It had been a good, sunny day, and so Luna broke out her overly large sunglasses with strange contraptions on the sides and her big, danish- looking sun hat. Then the clouds came out and she was forced to put them away.

"Say something you piece of Muggle filth!" Slytherin boy shouted forcefully, his ears shining bright red, reminding some of the spectators of most of the Weasley's hair in some ways. You could almost picture smoke coming out of them.

By now, there was not one person who wouldn't watch this one sided exchange, even with couple of teachers coming to the scene at Draco's last words. But before they could come near enough to interfere, Harry raised his head and noticed that people were staring at him and glancing at... someone behind him? He turned and noticed flustered Malfoy standing there. Harry reached to his ears and took out what looked like cotton balls from them. He shook his head slightly, and was surprised to listen to exactly the same quiet he had when the ear-plugs were secured into his ears. He expected some sort of chatter, but there was none.

"Sorry, I have a room-mate who snores and I forgot to take out my ear-plugs. Is there something I could help you with?" Harry asked pleasantly while placing the cotton in his pocket, hiding the fact that it simply disappeared just moments later.

Malfoy gave an angry shout and lunged with his fists at Harry, in his anger completely forgetting his wand. His punch haven't even made half the way when Twins intercepted him, dragging him by his arms away from Gryffindor table in the middle of howling Great Hall, while Malfoy still made strangling motion with his hands. Harry just sat there, looking confused, which doubled the laughter when people noticed it. With everyone watching the encounter Draco ended stuck in detentions every day for the rest of the year, and losing enough points from Slytherin to make chances for House Cup only a dream.

Rest of the time before the end of the year was spent in relative peace, if not counting the exam frenzy that swept over the students, that Hermione seemed to enjoy a bit too much. But as fun and

eventful this particular year was, the Basilisk still residing under the school had a strange feeling that there was another set of trouble just waiting out there to be stumbled upon.

AN. Another uneventful ending of the year. In cannon most of the events are in last two or three chapters, but since I again killed plot-line at the start of the year, it feels kind of empty here. Let us simply start a new year, and for this one, I already have some ideas laid down.

I don't have time for disclaimers now. I won't be able to sleep until I get this scene out of my head and on paper. I sometimes would like to be J. K. Rowling, since she already finished her story.

AN. Thank Enjoyeverymoment, as she spent her time cleaning my sleep-writing while I laid unconscious with keyboard as my pillow.

First day after Harry returned to Privet Drive was for him quite a shock. Truthfully, he wondered if by now it wasn't some sort of tradition, what with going-postal right before he started Hogwarts, and his relatives going one-eighty on their approach towards him the previous year. This time though, the surprise was that Dudley lost his weight to the point where you could notice it with a naked eye. But let us start at the beginning.

The whole affair started out as continuation of Vernon's and Petunia's efforts to discipline their son. While he was away from home and watchful eye of his parents, there still should be someone at Smelting's to remind him of proper behaviour. This problem didn't last long, as Vernon proposed admitting Dudley into a sports club.

Vernon came up with that idea almost immediately, because in all his years of studying at Smeltings, he couldn't enter any of them. No, not because his physique would unable him to participate in any sport events. It was just because he haven't came from family that was well off. What allowed him to finish his studies without changing schools was stipend that he received for good grades. It wasn't a great secret that Vernon was "just average", so to achieve that, bulk of his time was spent on studying. It ended as a double edged sword, since there was more than just scores employers put pressure on. Without any great out-of-class achievements, or additional areas of interest, Vernon ended as a part-time salesman, again left to make his way up the ladder, with only his ambition to rely on. By now he was Director at Grunnings, but to this day his mind was set on allowing Dudley, and even Harry, a better education and chance for finer life opportunities than he had.

While Vernon was "just average", you could clearly see that Dudley wasn't sharpest tool in the box. Well, that depends how you define "smart". If life came down to "get as much as you can, while doing as little as possible" Dudley would turn out to be a real genius. He might not pay attention to big things, but when it concerned him, he quickly caught to that cause-and-effect part of life. Do a temper

tantrum like a five-year-old to get another toy? Sure! Beat someone around to hear that he was awesome? Anytime.

Surprisingly, the same thing made him perform way above average in Boxing Club at Smeltings. While before he could just get what he wanted with a little trick, or just undermine anyone who performed better than him, unable that someone from getting the prize, he switched tactics after one training session. Maybe it would be different with a backyard boxing club made of some "friends", in reality being nothing more than a bully training facility. But in a proper gym, with strict instructors and rules of conduct clearly laid down, any misbehaviour would end up with punishment. After one training Dudley knew that he would have to work hard. If he didn't, he would be forced to work even harder.

One thing that stopped his initial thought of going to his parents, whining about "that awful club" was food, and oh-boy, Dudley loved food in any form. When he was applied for a spot in the club, he was sent to schools doctor who would determine his overall fitness. Doctor immediately said that he should go on a diet, but not one of those "eat-nothing" kind of things. While earlier most things he ate were sweat or deep fried, now he ate food suited for his training schedule, allowing him to build up his muscles in most efficient way. Loosing fat was just a side effect. Switching junk food for one suitable to development, while leaving the same number of calories, haven't shortened his rations. In fact, it evidently made his portions bigger.

Dudley didn't need to be smartest kid to see that being part of Boxing Club wasn't the worst case scenario. He was still regarded as awesome, with that right hook of his, and with his mind set only on results, he had a great chance for a sport scholarship. Even now he wasn't required to be on top of every class, since his results in boxing were just shining through. Somewhere along the way, in the middle of exhausting workouts, it just simply sunk into him that some things were just not done.

That was why Harry was surprised when just a couple of days after he got back, he found himself exchanging punches with Dudley. No, not fighting. Training together, trading tips, with Harry telling about dodging, and Dudley showing how to make every single punch hurt, or at least be meaningful. Harry had to admit that it was fun. Well, it was, until one particular day.

Some time in July while Harry was doing the dishes, there was a call on the phone. He couldn't hear clearly what Petunia was telling the person on the other end of the line, but from those quick glances in his direction, and overall body language of his aunt, there was one thing Harry was sure of. He wasn't going to like it.

When the conversation ended, Petunia hung up the phone, rather too carefully, and made her way to the kitchen.

"Harry, could I have a word with you?" she asked, her fingers twitching nervously as she carefully peeled away the dull pink nail varnish.

"Sure," he answered while drying the last plate.

"Marge just called to let us know she will in fact spend a week here."

Ah, so that was it. The infamous aunt Marge was coming. Harry remembered her, or rather her favourite dog, Ripper, rather too vividly. Having a furious bulldog munch on your leg is one of those things you don't really forget. It was his luck that by that time he knew he shouldn't pull it out of dogs jaws, instead push it as far as he could down its throat. Of course, it was entirely his fault that Ripper choked on his leg. But still, being locked in his cupboard and having shallow teeth marks was way better than having part of his leg amputated in drastic manner.

"The thing is," his aunt continued, bringing him from his thoughts. "We still haven't explained to her some things, and she still think that you attend St. Brutus'. We hoped to take it over time, with little steps, but now..." She looked around, anywhere but into Harry's eyes, not finishing her sentence.

"I will have to act like someone who really would attend St. Brutus', and only later you will be able to tell her that I'm getting better," Harry finished for her, getting only an embarrassed nod in return. "Okay," he answered simply.

"Wait, you're not angry about that?" asked his wide eyed aunt. She stared at him, her nail varnish forgotten.

"No, not really."

"But, why? She will think that..."

"For why I'm not angry. It's because it simply isn't true, and there is no point in fighting every single stupid thing people might make up. And if world would be truly made of what people think, there would be no place for courtrooms and trials, everyone would just make judgement based on what they think to be true. And besides, it will probably be more bothersome for you than me, having to coexist with someone like that."

Petunia's eyes got even wider as she sat heavily at the dinner table considering what they got them-self into.

Time passed quickly, with Harry dismissing whatever party Dursley wanted to prepare for his birthday some time before Marge's arrival. He simply asked for them to sign permission form allowing him to visit Hogsmade. Aside from that, Harry didn't even made too much preparations for his performance.

It isn't hard to act like a deranged person. Probably everyone heard the saying "It's the quiet ones you should keep an eye on". It's because angry people are generally split in two distinctive groups. Introverts and extroverts.

To give you an example, lets take a situation from everyday life. Imagine a person screaming at a cashier in a shop, simply because he gave that person wrong amount of change. That is an Extrovert. That type of person have short temper and is angry about almost anything, which is immediately noticeable by their loud shouts. Annoying but relatively harmless, because if that person isn't prone to spontaneous acts of violence, they should settle down after a short shouting-fit.

Cashier on the other hand is good example of an Introvert. He sits in his place, quietly doing his job and being polite, no matter how hard people shout at him, or how stupid the thing they rant about is. He goes through that every single day, until such a point that he have enough and comes to his job with a semi-automatic machine-gun and kills everyone he kind find in the shop. That's where you get "watch the silent one's" quote from.

All those small ticks or afflictions that people dismiss with simple "It'll go away" or "I'm too busy to go to the doctor" can really be their nervous system screeching something along the lines "Do something about this stress ass-hole, or I will make you blackout and you'll really regret it when you wake up."

No, it isn't hard at all to play a deranged person. All Harry had to do was to sit there quietly, with completely blank face, and from time to time do small things that would get noticed over time. Nervous tick here or there, that crazed look or insane glint in his eye which would vanish the next second, or his favourite combination, narrowing his eyes all of a sudden and putting that pleased smile on his face while staring at one of his relatives. All those small things, combined with anything Marge thought to be true, did the trick perfectly.

If his aunt and uncle didn't know that it was just an act, they would be terrified by the person that was living under the same roof as they were. But knowing that smile piece of information caused them to trouble themself with something else. They kept wondering that if he wouldn't be acting at all, would this kind of behaviour be entirely their fault.

Of course, his behaviour only gave more ammunition for Marge's spiteful jabs. Taunting. Not really the smartest thing to do when talking with degenerate that she thought Harry to be. Most people of that kind would just assume her comments to be challenges, and after third day of her stay, Harry had to wonder if there would be anybody who wouldn't be tempted to show her their skill in a very creative, though brutal, way, given the "pointers" she was constantly providing.

Since Harry was who he was, when spoken to in any way, his only response was to stare at the person with his blank face for about ten seconds, then blink really slowly, turn around and simply continue whatever he was doing. When he saw her next time, Harry had to thank Luna for that one.

And again, his behaviour wasn't to Marge's liking, and she just ranted harder about him. Things continued that way, until it was last day of her visit.

It was one of those fancy kind of dinners at Dursley's house, to make Marge's departure finer occasion. It was quite an uneventful affair,

with adults continuing a loose talk on various topics. It wasn't until after Marge had lots of wine and some brandy in her, and made a comment that the way he was wasn't even his fault, followed by comparison between his parents and dog-breeding, that Harry had enough.

Truth be told, he didn't know that much about his parents, so he couldn't even speak about them freely without making things up, but he always thought that it should be a written rule that you deal your business with the person you have problems with, not their family, associates, or just anyone that reminds you about them. Harry always thought that that was the reason behind "You shouldn't speak ill of the dead" argument. It's simply a cheap shot to badmouth person who isn't there to defend them-self.

"It's all up to the mother. If mother is no good, pups will turn up just as bad, or even worse," Marge was telling, when Harry chose to interrupt.

"In fact, it's the one that pups learn social behaviour from. If you take them really early from the mother and raise in different way, they will turn out to be totally different in the end."

"I won't stand you saying that about my brother's family who took you in, you ungrateful runt!" Marge snarled, drinking deeply from her glass after she finished the sentence.

"I though we were talking about dogs," Harry said, doing the usual Luna-kind-of-blink "But if you want to talk about what I do, then teachers from St. Brutus' should be mentioned. Like lately, one brought an actual gun to the class, you know, to do that "You shouldn't play with it" talk. BORING! But at least now I know how to clean it when it's jammed. Lucky I stole it to get some practice." Harry finished, thinking that he might have overdone it. He was proven that he did just a second later.

"HOW DARE YOU! Threatening my family in my house! You little..." Marge went into a frenzy, shouting as loudly as she could, with her bloodshot eyes, spite flying everywhere with every word that came from her mouth. If she were a dog she so much adored, she would be put down for rabies on the spot.

Three Dursleys thought three separate things. Dudley was wondering if Harry only joked about having a gun. Petunia didn't quite understand when building they were currently inside became Marge's own house. But Vernon. He just sat there, watching his sister change colours in her anger, various veins throbbing all over her face, that crazy way she was shouting. He sat there, and thought "Is it like that when I'm getting angry?". He sat there and couldn't believe his eyes, because if he would admit the family resemblance everyone else talked about, he didn't like anything from what he was seeing.

Everyone were brought back from their contemplations when Marge went stumbling from her seat, knocking furniture out of place in her drunken state, attempting to throw Harry and his things out, still ranting that she won't stand him any-more in her house. Petunia simply asked him to wait outside for Marge to calm down enough to go to sleep.

That's how he ended sitting at a bench at the end of the street, just staring at the dark sky. Suddenly, he got a feeling that he was being watched. He sat straighter, looking around, and finally noticed a big black dog, just staring at him from around the bush. They just stayed like that, staring at each-other for the longest while, before Harry noticed Magie walking step by step to the dog. When she was really close, she slowly reached out, like she would try to pet it. Then something bizarre happened. The dog started sniffing the air, with Magie's hand hanging only couple of inches away from it's snout. Finally it sneezed, and with last glance at Harry, run away. Harry just chuckled slightly, until he noticed that Magie was still standing there, looking in the direction the dog went to.

'What is it?' Harry asked after a while more.

'Usually I have to try to do something, like touch or pick something up. But that dog felt almost like one of our friends, like I could touch it any-time I wanted. It's just strange...' she answered with her head tilted to the side. Harry couldn't respond as their conversation was interrupted.

"Hey, kid. Have you seen a big black dog around here somewhere?" asked someone from the side.

Harry turned and noticed a man standing couple of yards away. He had a gaunt, sunken face, waxy skin, yellow teeth, and long, matted hair. He was dressed in rags, that maybe, a couple of decades earlier, could have been a nice, decent set of clothes. Harry's initial thought of dog being a stray, just looking for some food, now changed to a best friend of homeless person. Though, he had to wonder how someone like that made his way to the perfectly normal neighbourhood of Privet Drive.

"He went this way," Harry answered, while pointing to where the dog had run off to. After a moment in which exactly nothing happened, he turned again to the man still standing there. "Aren't you going after him?"

"Nah, he's probably just in a playful mood and lurking somewhere around. He'll turn up eventually," the stranger said with a tired, though mischievous smile on his face. "In fact, do you mind I take a little break on that lovely bench you're currently occupying?"

Harry just glanced to Magie, who gave him a sharp nod right before disappearing, confirming that she will be there if he needed help. After that he simply made space on the bench. The stranger took advantage of offered space, and for a tense minute, they would just sit there.

"It isn't every day that someone just lets people like me sit on the same bench." said the man, pointing to his tattered clothes, raising his dark eyebrows.

"Well, it's always good to take a break from living in the clone-world." Harry responded, wanting to keep the conversation light.

The older man just blinked, but after noticing the exact same houses going as far as eye could see, he gave a bark of a laughter. After that, it went smoother, with one thinking up a pun to the sentence the other one said just a moment earlier.

"I haven't introduced myself yet, have I? Some time away from people and you forget your manners." the man said.

"Well, it might have something to do with those torn pocket's of yours, maybe you just dropped them along the way. Don't worry

though, I'm not used to carrying my manners around too." Harry responded. The man just smiled while shaking his head.

"I'm Sirius." the stranger said while extending his hand.

"Serious, are you?" Harry responded, at which the man just snorted. "I'm Harry." he said with a smile while shaking the mans hand.

Harry didn't know why, but something about the moment he introduced himself just seemed odd. The way Sirius kept looking at him, like he knew him already, but couldn't tell how, or that reluctance in letting Harry's hand go.

"It's getting late, I should get back." he said, when the older man finally let go of him.

"Yeah, I should track that good for nothing dog..." Sirius responded, that tired sadness again settling into his eyes.

"See you." Harry said with a nod, and begun to make his way back to number four. With his back to the man, he couldn't see Sirius still standing by the bench, watching him walk away.

Harry's mind was too busy contemplating the odd feeling he had course through his bones when they shook hands... almost like he knew the man he had never before seen in his life.

AN. Just thought that last chapter was too short... Okay, fact that I couldn't sleep had something to do with it too.

Now, I can bash Snape, Malfoy's... pretty much anyone. But it's because bashing can be so much fun. Still, I always keep in mind that behind every singe human being there is a story explaining their behaviour. Like...

What if Dudley isn't a dimwit from birth, just someone who goes the shortest path, and never was made to work or try to hard for anything?

What if Vernon isn't that mean thug who snaps at whoever he don't like, just someone who is tired of having to work for every single thing in his life, and just not having enough patience to deal with any additional stress?

About Petunia's childhood we know a little, so unresolved anger at Lily is good basis as any to make her snap at anything odd.

About Sirius. If someone could check exactly, but I think that Sirius, while guards were near, looked bored more than anything else. He received the newspaper with Weasley family on vacation in it, because he wanted to solve the crossword from what I remember. Only when he saw Pettigrew on the picture, he escaped. So I think he's crazy out of his mind only when it concerns killing the rat. That's why I think he would be able to sit and joke around with Harry, though that haunted look in his eyes still lingers, showing that Dementor's had their effect on him.

I could be J. K. Rowling, owner of Harry Potter, only during a Look-Alike Contest. But even there I would loose... badly.

AN. She did it again. EnjoyEveryMoment, notice capital letters. So many details to keep track off. That's why when she is busy checking through the chapter, I'm constantly checking out her profile... Damn. That doesn't sound entirely right, does it?

The days following aunt Marge's visit was a quiet affair when it came to inhabitants of Number Four, Privet Drive. Dudley would spend hours in basement, punching at his training bag, sometimes getting distracted, missing and falling somewhat gracefully onto the hard, slippery, wooden surface of the floor. Uncle Vernon, after just coming from work, would sit in front of the television, going through the channels, not even paying attention what was actually playing on the screen. Petunia on the other hand was in her usual place by the window, but not really spying on neighbours, just staring off in space, as though there was something more interesting than Mr Golding's dying rose bush.

Harry just assumed that they had to think it all through, make sure that the thing troubling them was true. He thought that they wanted to know that what they were worrying about was normal before voicing their thoughts. It wasn't like Harry didn't have his own disturbing, troubling thoughts. That odd feeling when he had met that peculiar man the other day. It just couldn't stop bugging him, it was just always somewhere at the back of his mind, slowly picking away at his conscious and unconscious brain.

Today was just like any other day up to this point. The Dursley's were moping around the house while Harry did his usual, painstakingly boring chores. Work he did around the house lessened even more when Dudley joined to the circulation, but alas, schedule pointed that it was his turn to clean the kitchen. So he didn't spare much thought to his relatives going through another silent day, instead concentrating on his work, and having a silent conversation with Magie.

While he was hard at work, she sat at the table, swinging her legs, doing everything she could to be totally unhelpful. Harry had to chuckle at this. Even with all those amazing things she could do, she spent so much time thinking of ways to get out of work. That, or she

just related to him what couple of people in the city thought about the matter.

'Magie, would you like a pet?' Harry asked after a moment of silence in which she would just roll from side to side atop the table. She tilted her head thoughtfully for a second, but Harry could tell she wasn't really paying attention to her answer.

'I don't know. Why do you ask?' she replied, not even sitting up. She stretched out her legs on the tabletop, yawning slightly as she surveyed Harry with a glint in her eyes.

'Since I can't really forget about that big black dog, I noticed that there aren't any animals in the city,' Harry told her, picturing the big black and shaggy dog that accompanied the mysterious man from the other night. That made her stop swinging, and she turned around to face him.

'I haven't thought about that before, but you're right. I wonder why?' She tilted her head again, and Harry wondered if she always did that when she was thinking.

'Well, like you said yourself, our friends are basically just my thinking patters. As goofy, mad, pedantic, or anything else they are, they're just characteristic things I notice in real people put together. But I was thinking. You can hear about someone as proud as a peacock, sloppy as a pig, healthy as a horse, so it shouldn't be too hard to give each and every one of them a pet. Even though I worry what exactly would fit some of them, I think you are somewhat safe.'

'Why would I be safe? You already know what's mine?'

'I constantly wonder how much of a cat-like person you are. And not really one of those vicious types like lion or a panther. More like a little fluffy kitten...' that just earned him a poisonous glare from her 'Though I guess I can be mistaken,' he corrected himself. 'Fine, if you don't want to be cute, we can just get you a mask until you learn how to maintain that hateful look all the time.' That on the other hand earned him a light a chuckle out of her. 'So what do you think?'

'Hmm...' she sighed, but couldn't respond as a loud mewl from the floor caught their attention.

Harry looked down and spotted a little black cat rubbing against his legs. It certainly couldn't be real, as his aunt would go mad just at the thought of something like that, constantly bringing dirt to her perfectly clean house. Rules for spring cleaning didn't apply in this house; it was more like hour cleaning, maybe even every half an hour if Aunt Petunia was particularly bored.

'Well, it just shows how easily it can be done. Any thoughts how we should name it?'

"Harry, do you have a minute?" his aunt asked, coming to the kitchen.

He looked back at the empty table, then down at the spotless floor. Magie must have disappeared, taking her little friend with her.

"Sure. In fact, I'm already done here." he said, stowing away the cleaning supplies.

"I was just thinking about that old mattress of yours, and thought you would sleep better if you had new one."

"Well, I don't think so," he replied coyly, drying his hands on a tea cloth.

"Why?" Petunia asked, clearly surprised.

"Because I slept in it practically all my life. Weeks could pass before I'm accustomed to a new one to the point where I can have a comfortable sleep. Since I'm only here for the summer, it isn't really worth it."

"But then, what about beds at... you know, your school," she asked, somewhat careful not to say the dreaded name.

"I think that they're... special," he said, wondering how long his relatives will be touchy about the subject. "I think that they're comfortable no matter what sleeping habits you might have had before," Harry said, wondering whether or not the beds truly were enchanted.

This time he stopped. But it wasn't because he might say something wrong. At the exact moment he put the last of his cleaning

equipment away, he turned to face his aunt. It was an announcement on the television that caught him off balance and caused him to stumble slightly, and made his mouth go slack.

"...The public is warned that Black is armed and extremely dangerous. A special hot line has been set up, and any sighting of this mysterious Black should be reported immediately." After that, reporter started relating entirely different set of news, gaining a quick rant from Vernon, before he again begun to jump through the channels.

While the news were disturbing enough, it was the picture shown on the screen that caught most of Harry's attention. The face displayed was hard to be mistaken, and he had a sinking feeling that he knew first name of the infamous Mr. Black.

"Harry? Harry!" A voice shouted, jolting him away from his terrifying thoughts and back to reality,

"Huh?" he asked, shaking his head wildly.

"You looked like you were somewhere else. Is something wrong?" Aunt Petunia asked him, touching him briefly on the shoulder, before snatching back her hand quickly

"No. I just remembered something. I'll be in my room," he said whilst walking up the stairs, not paying attention to his aunt still standing in the kitchen, watching him curiously.

When he got to his room, he knew one thing. There was no reason to tell his already distraught family that he saw Black just couple of days back. Beside that, he had no idea what was going on. Was that why he had that odd feeling that something was wrong with the man he had meet? Since he hadn't ever met an escaped convict before, he had no way of comparing the feeling; but just that whole notion... An escaped convict having couple of minutes to sit with him right outside of people's homes, and do a quick joke contest. It was just so ridiculous on so many levels that it wasn't even funny. While being on the run would explain that haunted eyes of his, it didn't explain why he wasn't afraid to sit on that bench, in full view of anyone that happened to walk past. They said that he was "armed and dangerous". If they would add "out of his mind" it would somewhat stick, but now? At first he had that odd feeling, but now

he knew that there was something wrong with the picture, but he had no idea what exactly could it be.

He hadn't even had a full hour to think it through, when tapping at his window reached his ears. Clear signal that his owl was back. This year he tried to keep up to date with his friends, but even with somewhat steady schedule, Hedwig amazed him. She was there whenever he needed to write someone, but sometimes she would come with an unexpected letter from Hermione, the only one who didn't have her own owl. With all the flying that she did this year, Harry had to wonder how she knew when he or Hermione wanted to send mail to the other, and exactly how close Hermione's house was from Privet Drive.

This train of thoughts ended the second he begun reading Hermione's latest letter. The single topic she described in this one, was a loud story described in length in latest Daily Prophet. The story was so loud because it regarded the only known escape ever from the wizard prison, Azkaban. Name of the escaped convict, just because the world hated him right now, was Sirius Black. She was so nice to even add the pages from the paper, with the same unmistakable face, this time on wizards moving picture.

"Aha! A clue, Watson. We may be onto something," passed through Harry's mind, but not necessarily followed by an answer to this mystery. Instead, this latest snippet of information just made already complicated problem so much more confusing. He didn't even noticed how much time passed while he was just sitting at his desk, staring out of the window, while deep in his thoughts. But at some point...

'I don't know if you really noticed, but he's here again,' someone said from beside him, bringing him back to reality once more.

'Who? Where? Again? What are you talking about?' he asked in confusion. He didn't quite understood what Magie, who was sitting at his desk, petting her cat, was trying to tell him. Or even, when she got there.

Her response was to just stare at something just behind him, and after he followed her gaze, he couldn't understand what was so interesting in his wardrobe. That lasted as long as it took the pair of

tennis-ball-like eyes to blink, which was enough for Harry to catch on the Spot-the-difference game Magie was playing with him.

"Could you stop lurking around in my wardrobe already?" Harry said aloud.

Dobby reluctantly stepped out of the closet, wringing his hands awkwardly.

"Dobby thought that he was good at hiding. But Dobby should know better than to sneak up on Great Harry Potter. How long had Harry Potter known Dobby was here?"

"Long enough," Harry answered while looking at Magie, who was smirking down at him. "So, why do I owe the pleasure of you visiting me again?" he asked, once again turning to the house elf looking up at him shyly.

"With a bad, bad wizard out there, Dobby thought he would protect Harry Potter, and earn the right to be Harry Potter's elf," the house elf answered excitedly, just to look at the floor moments later. "Dobby forgot that Harry Potter doesn't need Dobby," he finished in a depressed voice.

He didn't know why, but Harry instantly remembered two seemingly unimportant things. A letter from Hermione, asking how he liked it, and the way Dobby tried helping him year before.

"Let me guess that you had something to do with my missing Birthday present?"

Dobby just nodded awkwardly, and pulled couple of packages out of the pillowcase he was wearing.

"You said that you know about a bad wizard. Do you mean Sirius Black?" Harry asked seeing the dejected state Dobby was in. The house-elf just nodded, with his head still low. "Would you mind telling me what exactly do you know about him?"

That was exactly what Dobby was waiting for. He immediately jumped on the chance to be helpful again, and told story that it heard long ago. A story that didn't exactly make Harry's day. It was roughly the same thing that was circulated through wizarding

community after Sirius Black was apprehended, that he was Potter's secret keeper when they went into hiding, betrayed them to the Dark Lord, and then was caught right after murdering Peter Petigrew and leaving only his finger. It was also the first time that Harry heard that he had a godfather.

Harry just frowned harder with every passing sentence that came from Dobby's excited and never stopping mouth. His first thought that there was something wrong with the picture, now became a gaping hole in the whole affair. Now it was quite easy to understand an unknown convict just wanting to rest and for a while "act normal". But this? Sirius was said to be close friend of Potter's, then he couldn't have mistaken him. Everyone say just how much he resembled his father. At least that explained why the man felt familiar, but if he wanted all Potters dead, they were sitting there long enough to let him get Harry's trust and get the job done. His concerns were partly solved by Dobby.

"Dobby doesn't think that that story is entirely true."

"Why is that?"

"The Malfoy's are bad, bad wizards..." Harry had to smile at the little fellow. While earlier he looked ready to punish himself for even thinking bad of his masters, now he cringed and shuddered, clearly fighting the impulse. Harry had to think just how much power a "master" had over his house-elf.

"They are bad, bad wizards," Dobby started again, when the initial impulse passed. "And Mas... Malfoy senior laughed the whole thing off, saying that papers found perfect scapegoat for what happened. Dobby is good at hiding, Dobby is. Ma... Malfoy senior never knew how much Dobby could hear." Again, Harry had to smile whenever the house-elf sidestepped saying master.

He sat there, thinking about the whole case, and settled on thinking that another summer project fell right into his hands. It was time to investigate... but where could he find that kind of a hat. He certainly didn't need a pipe, but maybe a nice coat would be in order. Just as he started thinking about his own Dr. Watson, Magie appeared, already dressed in a complete costume for that character, even complete with a small, and possibly fake moustache. He didn't even

had time to snort, before Dobby interrupted his musings for a second time.

"Will Harry Potter be wanting Dobby, or should Dobby go away?" he asked, again wringing his hands nervously, his big orb eyes looking up at him, unblinking.

Harry regarded him closely, thinking again just how long he didn't have any kind of master. "You can stay," he said eventually, hoping that he wouldn't have to regret that decision.

The little elf immediately started bouncing excitedly. "I can? I can! Will Master Potter be needing something?" Dobby asked, again settling into the role of a perfect butler.

"I don't want to be your Master..." he begun.

"Then what should Dobby call Harry Potter?" he asked before Harry could finish his sentence.

"How about friend?" Harry said with a smile. That gave Dobby a pause, and he just stood there looking at Harry with those big, unnerving eyes of his. "I don't want to bond with you." Immediately Dobby lost all enthusiasm, again helplessly staring at the floor. "Or rather, I should say that I don't need to." Dobby raised his head, confused.

Harry just winked at Magie, who was again in her usual jeans and t-shirt combo, as she went to stand right in front of Dobby. The moment she placed her hand on top of his head, a slight shudder passed through his body. She just stroked his head, and after a while, he fell to the ground, completely relaxed, with a goofy grin on his face.

Many stories Harry heard during his "lessons" with the basilisk, was about magical animals. Just like Slytherin said, wand magic was totally different from wandless magic, when it came to how energy was used. Mage's using wandless magic just simply radiated energy, just like one does with body heat. Continuing this example would place wand right next to muggle flame-thrower. Heat in both cases, but different way of distributing it. Once upon a time, it was enough for one wizard to live in one place for it to begin spawning magical plants or animals. Over time, they would set into balance, and even

if that wizard died, the power would just circulate in the ecosystem, following natural order. When wand users started to cast their spells, with their power alone they disrupted that elusive balance. It wouldn't be so bad if only animals and plants could use power from those spells, but just like with flame-thrower, you couldn't use warmth immediately, unless you wanted to get burned. Whatever energy was left after the spell took its effect, and was around so long to be useful to environment, was no comparison to what was lost in the exchange.

That's why at first there was a large scale extinction effect in the magical flora and fauna, after which whatever plant's and animal's were left, tried to adapt to changing world. House-elves were once just another kind of forest-spirit, just like pixies or some kinds of fairies. When the world changed, fairies took route of becoming their transparent spirit-selves that they were now, pixies on the other hand got smaller and smaller with every passing generation. Both of those tactics served to minimise energy they needed to live. Elves on the other hand thought they would be better if they would be useful to the modern wizards. Maybe Elves never were those beautiful kind of human sized creatures, roaming the woods like muggle legends tell they were, but they certainly weren't shrivelled twisted little things that people called House-elves. House-elf, even the name was just a pun, just like house-cat or other kind of house-pet. The way Elves looked now was caused by generations of living on what little "food" they were given, courtesy by their "masters". That was only reason for bonding with elf, just to feed your little pet. Certainly they couldn't live on their own, not in the wizarding world as it was now.

That's why Harry had to smile at the little guy, as he was lying on the floor being petted by Magie. Harry had to wonder if that gurgling noise that Dobby was emanating wasn't by chance a purr.

While that was going on, he turned to the presents still residing on his bed. There was that Broom Servicing Kit just like Hermione described it. Beside that, there were other minor presents from Neville, Ron, and something that looked like a dream-catcher made of spaghetti from Luna, with note saying that she heard that it was good for catching Mira-Night's. Harry just had to wonder how on earth she was able to bend uncooked spaghetti.

Beside that, Harry spotted one more peculiar item on his bed. It looked like a large, square, very worn piece of parchment with nothing written on it. In the same envelope it fell from, there was a note from the Twins.

We thought that it's a suitable birthday present, and fact that we already know everything it can teach us have nothing to do with us giving it to you. At this point you already should know that you shouldn't judge parchment by its cover, not that it have anything beside front page. We once told you about prankster secret, and since you showed some skill in it, we leave you with one last challenge. Let's see how fast you can find it's secret.

Well, it seemed that it was raining mysteries today. Harry just had to pray that there wasn't prognosis for thunderstorms coming the next day.

The Knight Bus. Not really most pleasant, safest or even funniest ride in Harry's life, but it was probably the fashion that you travelled in, that already made it legendary, with students grumbling how they were made to use it's services for one reason or another. Still, it was best way to travel for someone who couldn't make a port-key, didn't know how to apparate, or have an easy access to Floo.

Harry couldn't quite understand wizards when it came to travel. From what he had read so far, all forms of travel that they had at their disposal were quite uncomfortable, even after you got used to the usually crash landing part. But still it made absolutely no sense in economic way.

Least used were port-keys. All that took to make one was any object which you could charm, and you could travel to any place on earth, considering your calculations were good enough. Yes, that was quite the downside, having to know couple of arithmetical equations for long distance travel, or to places you never were in. That was why there was strict exam when you applied for license, but if you got one, you could easily find a job in any part of transport industry, which included nice starting salary.

Next in line was Apparition. Again, required was a license, but test was something like acquiring driving license, when port-key exam was something closer to flight license. After that if there wasn't a magical marker in place, like apparition zones in trading districts,

explaining why Auror's took so long to come to crime scene, you had to know location you were Apparating to, meaning you had to be there at least once already. Still for long distance travel you usually had to make more than one jump, which was quite tiring with each mile travelled.

Now the case became absurd with Floo network, since it was used the most. While after passing your exams and acquiring licenses you could port-key and apparate to your hearts content from practically any spot in the world, Floo had to be used from a fireplace connected to the system. Moreover you had to buy the powder. Harry didn't know if wizards understood just how much it costed to grow, gather, process and finally deliver, from plant to it's final, powdered form. Maybe in older days, when flora of magical world was way larger but now... If time meant money, it was way more economic to have an adult side-along apparate couple of people exhaustion him/herself, take half or an hour to rest, and go along his business, than have the same group go through Floo network.

Harry didn't particularly care for money, since he didn't go to shops often, but that last trip with Knight Bus just showed him how little money he had left from last year. In fact, now he remembered that last year he hadn't even made any withdrawals, just going down to vaults for that roller-coaster-like ride. Just another proof that he haven't acquired that usual "Have some change in your pocket" habit most people have.

He made this trip to Diagon Alley mostly to look for some more information on Sirius Black, something he doubted Hogwart's library would include, though student's records could be an interesting read. Still, all his plans had to be postponed until he visited Gringot's. Again going up the steps of the bank, he remembered to bow back to the goblin welcoming customers to the bank. He waited patiently for person in front of him to finish his business, but just as he stepped up to the goblin at the desk, he remember one little thing. He didn't had his key at hand.

"How may Gringots serve you today, sir?" a goblin at the desk asked in voice that showed he used this sentence probably for the thousandth time today. Harry wasn't really surprised, considering all of the customers or employees bustling around the main entrance.

"I would like to visit my vault, but I don't have my key with me," Harry said, trying to keep his tone nonchalant.

The goblin stopped scribbling in his small pocket book to regard Harry with slightly narrowed eyes. Harry had to remind himself of the initial thoughts he had after reading the poem on the Gringots' doors for the first time. He certainly won't earn any sympathy while making problems with simplest thing bank can do for it's customers.

"Other kind of identification will suffice," goblin said, and after noticing that Harry didn't quite understand his comment. "Your wand, please," he added simply, strangely making please sound slightly offensive.

Harry handed his wand over, and watched goblin run his hand over it. He did it two more times before, with eyebrow's furrowing he asked:

"Is this a wand straight from a wand shop?"

"No, sir," Harry said, not knowing what was happening. He shuffled his feet slightly, and coughed as the goblin stopped whatever he was doing to Harry's precious wand.

Goblin snapped his gaze straight at him, regarding him curiously, partly for the added "Sir".

"How long have you been using it then?" he snapped in the end, his eyes possible even narrower, shaped now into slits.

"Two years, this will be my third year at Hogwarts." That just made the goblin scowl harder, if Harry read his facial expression right.

Suddenly, the goblin at the desk snapped his fingers, and immediately two armed ones came to Harry's sides. He just stood there, opting for being quiet unless asked to speak. He didn't want to make matters worse, since he didn't know what was going on in the first place.

"Please, follow me," the goblin who just jumped from his high stool said, going straight for one of the doors at the end of the hall, with one of the armed ones going right behind Harry. The other one stood guard in front of now vacant desk.

Harry thought that this would be seen as quite a scene, him being walked under ground, but one look behind him showed that everyone else was just minding their business. How was he to know that it was normal for visitors at Gringots having a guard when taken deeper into the bank? For cart ride one bank employee was enough, since one was enough to keep an eye on customers going in and out of the vaults. For any other matters, there was one to announce it with proper department employee, and at least one more to keep an eye on the waiting customers. There was a point where hearing about dead customers who got lost in the maze-like bank was just enough.

Even with many corridors to chose from in many intersections along the way, goblins seemed to go swiftly through the route, just like it was straight line for them, and in no time he was in front of a door looking like someone important was sitting right behind them. He didn't had long to appreciate intricate carvings on it, since just as quickly as he was brought here, the goblin who took his wand explained the matter at hand to who Harry guessed was his superior. The goblin went out of the office and hurried, probably to go back to his post, as Harry was ushered into the office.

At the desk sat a really old goblin, though Harry's opinion might be biased by the white hair on his head. He really was someone important, walls of his office lined with ageless books and what seemed to be expensive trinkets, if what little magical education Harry had might be trusted. If not all that, two assistants doing his bidding and additional guards in the room might be a big hint.

"Ah, hello, Mr. Potter. My name is Ragnok," the aged goblin said in a scratchy voice, at which one of his assistant immediately served a pitcher of crystal clear water and two cups. As Harry sat in the offered chair, one of the guards left his spot to whisper couple of sentences in Gobbledegook, before swiftly returning to his post. "Humour an old goblin like me Mr. Potter. Pray tell, why would human bow to goblin or add Sir while addressing one?"

"Well, if I'm not mistaken I think you're talking about the Gringot's entrance. But it just feels like a polite thing to do. In muggle world there are people called ushers or doorkeepers, and they do the same thing, welcoming you to the building while holding the door for you, or hailing a cab while you're exiting. It's just natural to say thank

you, or something similar, but since I didn't know if I should talk with goblins on the steps, I just did what they did. And adding sir, to me, is just a way to show respect. I always thought that it's important to show respect to people you make business with. I hope I haven't offended anyone," Harry finished his speech, while looking around the various goblins in the room. Ragnok just raised an eyebrow at his response.

"We goblins have a saying Mr. Potter," Ragnok begun after a while of thought "Not that we use it much, since we don't make a lot of them, but still sometimes we say, "You made a mistake? Don't worry, nobody is human.""

Harry had to make a double take. It was slight change on muggle "Nobody is perfect" quote, but still, it was strange to think that a fierce goblin would do a try at humour.

'I'll bite,' Harry said eventually, giving Ragnok a side-ways glance.

"That is good one, sir. But have you heard this one? If a blood purist is in the middle of a forest, with nobody able to hear what he is saying, is he still wrong about the words that he's spewing?" another twist on muggle saying, but it was enough, if those toothy grins that bloomed on every face of goblin present was any indication.

"No, I must say that I haven't heard that one before. But it doesn't seem like a hard puzzle at all," he replied, getting a few deep chuckles from the goblins present, and watching Harry for his next move.

'Show him,' a voice said out of nowhere, and Harry was surprised to see Salazar standing right next to him. He didn't have to check if he heard him right, as even with the corner of his eye he could catch that piercing look of his mentor and a sharp nod indicating that he should just do it.

"Ragnok, sir. I heard that it isn't proper to use magic inside the walls of the bank, but if I might show you something?"

The aged and wrinkled goblin watched him for a long while, sometimes switching his gaze from Harry's face to look at the wand now lying in the middle of his desk. It was now Ragnok's turn to consider if he should bite.

"Very well, but be careful about it," he said in the end, not even having to motion to the guards standing at attention.

Harry raised his hands from the arm rest of the chair he was sitting in, but instead of reaching for his wand, he held them on eye level, on both sides of his head. A confused frown which appeared on Ragnok's face, changed to a wide-eyed surprise the moment the pitcher lifted itself from the desk and begun to fill one of the cups. He had to raise his own hand to stop guards from striking down the only human in the room. He regarded the pitcher for a moment, Harry thought that, for a split second, he might even look at Magie who was filling the second cup, before once again looking at the wand still lying on his desk.

"That would explain things," Ragnok said after pitcher was again standing still, and he was served his cup of water. "Tell me Mr. Potter, why have you just done that?"

"Excuse me?" Harry asked, not really understanding.

"I was asking, why would you show me such a great secret. Not many wizards can do that, and knowledge that you do, can be either profitable, or very damaging. Or even both, depending who will be concerned," Ragnok said, once again carefully watching every move Harry did.

"I don't really know a lot about politics or negotiations, but I know that I should give something to receive something else." Harry begun, still remembering the poem. "So, it's kind of peace offering, since you now know that I can do that, and it won't be a surprise for you. But even then, I think it might be a slight threat to you. Up until now I was just a human, nothing if he have no wand with him. Now you have to trouble yourself just how much can I do without it." Truthfully, he would have stopped at the first part, but after some urging from Slytherin, he added other, more threatening, part of the story.

The result was something that probably no human heard for a good couple of centuries. A deep belly laughter filled the room, courtesy of Master Ragnok. Harry had to say that if he heard that kind of a sound in the middle of the night, he would bolt as far away from it as he could, but seeing mirth in goblin eyes, was probably the only

thing which allowed him to classify that particular sound as "jolly". Soon enough other goblins would join in the chuckle, clearly laughing at a joke that Harry didn't understand.

"Very good, very good indeed," said Ragnok, while coming down from his fit. "Threaten them with truth. Are you sure you shouldn't been born a goblin Mr. Potter?" he added, getting another round of laughter from the room.

As it was, goblins weren't as they seemed to be. Mean? Yes. Malicious? Of course. Harsh, ill willed and holding grudge for long, long time? Yes, yes, and beyond the point where it hurt. But... and it was a large but, they were that way only to the ones they despised, or waged merciless war against. That explained why Salazar was confused the first few time Harry mentioned Goblin rebellions near him. It just so happened that wizard of modern times were in the "Hold grudge for all eternity" group, where goblins were concerned at least.

Goblins were not small without a reason. Their domain was earth, and they spent many generations carving their caves out of solid rock. Their small frame didn't hinder their strength, in fact, denser muscles gave them more power out of their little body, with additional bonus of their flesh being their greatest weapon and armour. There was a reason why most wars with Goblins ended with treaties.

Those only started when humans begun delving into the art of mining. At first nothing major happened, but after they noticed already carved tunnels just under the surface of the earth, they went straight for them and riches at their end, bypassing all the exhausting digging which would probably take years. Of course there was a problem in form of inhabitants of those tunnels. Namely, Goblins. It was one of those power struggles between riches hungry and those who only wanted to live their lives.

Back then Goblins didn't treat people as one big group, still being happy to trade with anyone honourable. That changed quickly when their own swords or armours were used against them by someone who inherited such a valuable thing. That was why goblins now regarded passing their artefact's along wizardry lines as theft. Not because they were greedy little bastards, but there simply weren't many descendants who would be as noble as their ancestors.

Craftsman only begun work on the piece when he regarded human who ordered it to be worthy. Next generation should pass through the same procedure, with descendant of the crafter judging descendant of the buyer. Not returning the item to the goblin nation upon death of person who ordered the object in itself disqualified the person as honourable. Maybe wizards regarded goblins as demons incarnate just because goblin etiquette wasn't the most commonly taught subject upon this earth.

Harry just summarised that he should visit Gringots more often than just once a year.

Back at the Privet Drive, after very long talk with Master Ragnok, Harry sat at his desk still thinking through things he learned in just couple of hours. It was strange that even while he was so deep in his thoughts she could distract him so successfully.

He turned to Magie, who was lying on her stomach on his bed, looking at the piece of parchment Twins sent him as a birthday present, and chewing gum. No, not chewing. Popping. He stared at her for couple of minutes, while she would just swing her legs back and forth, staring at the blank piece of parchment in front of her and chewing. No, not chewing. Popping.

'What exactly are you doing?' he asked in the end.

'Reading through instruction manual.' she answered simply, doing exactly what she was doing so far.

Harry gagged and choked, even though he had nothing to choke on. Just the thought that he spent hours thinking about that parchment before he went to Diagon Alley, and now her telling him that there was instruction manual, could do this to him.

'There is an f-ing instruction manual for this thing?' he asked incredulously.

'Yes, here, on the back side.' she answered, picking the parchment up and shoving it right in front of his face.

For Harry it still looked like a perfectly clear piece of parchment. Magie huffed, though he had that strange idea that it was a masked

chuckle, probably entirely at his expense. She took off his glasses, cleaned them just like she did in the Chamber of Secrets. When she gave them back, he could see blurry spots on the parchment. It wasn't clear like in the Chamber, but it was probably difference between wandless and wand magic. Maybe if he was like Magie, he could see everything clearly. That made him wonder, just how differently she looked upon things. Still, scrunching over the black dots on the parchment, he could make out couple of words.

"I solemnly swear... that I'm ... up to no good," Harry read aloud, almost face-slapping himself moments later. Because just like that, the whole thing became as clear as day for him.

If you take name of author of original Harry Potter series and try to rearrange letters, there is no way you will get God B. Damned, so stop thinking that I could be J. K. Rowling.

AN. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows part 1 premiere, so EnjoyEveryMoment abandoned me to go and watch it... Haven't heard from her for a while... This chapter isn't much because I didn't have someone to develop ideas with... Had to clean it all by myself *grumbles*... Whatever! Who would need her in the first place... *sigh* *looks left, no one's there* *looks right, no one's there* *hangs his head* *sniff* I'm so lonely...

Harry's vacation turned out to be quite busy. Between studying Marauders Map, searching information regarding Sirius Black and his visits to Gringott's to have a friendly chat with Master Ragnok, he had enough on his mind without having to worry about days just passing by.

Marauders Map was quite an ingenious piece of magic. Whoever created it must have put a lot of effort in his research, as nearly every place in the castle was drawn out, be it corridors, classrooms, or even secret passageways. Though Harry still knew that not everything, since Chamber of Secrets was nowhere to be seen. Even without that, there was enough interesting things visible to keep him busy and sometimes intrigued how he could have passed right next to them.

First time he swept his gaze over the map he was surprised to see secret exits from the school. Only after a moment of thought he came to conclusion that he shouldn't have been. Hogwarts was a Castle. It was pretty common thing to put underground tunnels which were useful when the castle was under siege. You could smuggle rations inside of the castle, without your enemy knowing, or exit in the middle of the night to sabotage or ambush enemy troops. Of course, in the event that the incoming army succeeding in blowing the gates open, a secure escape rout was very much appreciated.

But even with that, Harry had to wonder about one peculiar tunnel that was shown on the map. It didn't started inside of the castle, but instead was in the middle of Hogwarts grounds, running all the way to the edge of the map. It nearly looked like someone miscalculated while digging his own entrance from the outside, coming up in that

particular spot. That in itself was peculiar, but if someone put it on the map as an escape route from the castle, Harry had to wonder where it might lead.

Even more interesting riddle was Sirius Black. It wasn't even about who he was, where he came from or what were his intentions. The puzzling part was about information. Saying more, there simply was none. While Harry could find books about Black family with short notice of him, over-exaggerated stories of the fall of Dark Lord naming Sirius his handyman, or even some news in old papers about Black's and Potters deeds, relationships and the like. But beside that, there was nothing solid. Nothing which would indicate he was the wolf in sheep clothing like everyone told him to be, being friends with Harry's parents only because he was waiting for good opportunity to strike.

Maybe in itself it wasn't so strange, Harry thought at first. Not everyone have to be the talk of the town and be in every book or on first page of every newspaper. Harry stopped even counting how many stories of himself he had encountered during his search. But even if that wasn't strange, there always was that saying that if you have at least two such cases, you have a conspiracy.

Harry's "second case" in this instant, were Ministry files regarding the man, and this was where the real problem started. It wasn't even about bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo about handing out governmental documents, because it haven't got that far. In first letter Harry sent to the Ministry, he inquired about public records, something simple, like what exactly Sirius Black was charged with, what was exact date of the trial as if he could check it in old newspapers, or even how long he was meant to stay in Azkaban. Unfortunately nothing came out of it.

He got a very well worded reply from the records department, explaining how in unsettling times some records might have been misplaced or lost, and that such accidents happened. Reading between the lines: there were no records concerning Sirius Black in the ministry. Only things they had were two forms. One of Black being delivered to a holding cell. Second, that he was transferred to Azkaban. Both signed in only couple of days time. The second one was their proof that he was meant to stay in the prison, but outside of that, there was no proof that Sirius Black had a trial. Harry didn't knew what to think about that, but like lawyer's like to say: "A man is

innocent, until he is proven guilty.". Too bad that many bad people used that to weasel them self out of jail.

It was good that Harry had those talks with Master Ragnok, because they certainly got his mind from running in circles about black hole that was Black's case, and somewhat lightened his mood.

When you got on the better side of a goblin you noticed why they were so good at running their bank. They were efficient, swift and precise about their work. When they noticed that there was problem to be solved, there was no pause before they got right on it, and they didn't rest well until the job was done.

It was probably due to their history, giving the goblin nation a completely different mindset that the one of human being. In the early ages when goblin's only started to dig through earth, building their homes, they couldn't just end the day's work and go to sleep. There was no rest until they made sure that newly dug out tunnel was stable and would hold. If it wasn't the case, one minor cave in might disturb earth around, ending in the entire tunnel complex caving in, burying every goblin alive.

In those times, goblins knew no form of art, paintings or sculptures being useless in the dimly lit corridors. The only form of music that they practised, were a low rumbling hum accompanying the steady sound of their tools beating against the hard rock. But still, it was more of practical thing, keeping work going, and assuring that they were breathing steadily, keeping them from running out of breath.

So, even if humans and goblins wanted homes, food, and family all the same, there was a major difference when you compared what they strived for in life. While average human being wants to posses, be it money, knowledge, skills, or anything else, all goblins wanted just one thing. Honour. Even with all the money they earned while running their bank, coins were nothing more to them than another glittering rock they could carve out of the earth. What amount of money did, was to show which goblin did his job best, thus which should be honoured most among his peers.

In human history there was no shortage of heroes, while day to day news were mostly about all the robberies, scandals, catastrophes or anything drastic that happened in the world. In goblin nation, it was other way around. Goblins talked mostly about their successes, or

praises that other goblin rightfully received. In their history though, was all the evil of their world. Goblins did not hide their faults in the dark areas of the history, skipping tragedies that happened in the past. While every goblin wanted to be honoured and remembered, all of goblin history was composed of those who tried to cheat their way to greatness. All the scum of goblin nation were described in every possible detail, with extreme pressure on the punishment they received. It wasn't long before Harry summarised those tales as a simple message. "Bring honour to your nation, and you will be remembered. Be a disgrace, and you will be remembered for all eternity."

Harry was sitting in his room, after another uneventful information search followed by a nice chat with Master Ragnok. Even now Harry had to constantly remind himself just how cruel goblins could be, even to their own kind. He was just thinking about latest story regarding lazy Swiftfang, who was punished for going to sleep instead of doing his work. As a punishment, a big bucket was placed on his shoulders to which rocks were added until such a point where he understood for what he was being punished. Only problem was, he never got it right.

Fortunately, Harry was spared of second visualisation of a very graphic description of goblin dying under a constantly growing pile of rocks that Ragnok supplied, by tapping on his window. He turned his gaze, only to notice an owl with a letter in the same green ink as the one he received from Hogwarts.

Dear Mr. Potter,

We remind you that every third-year student is required to pick two elective subjects. Available are the following:

Study of Ancient Runes

Arithmancy

Muggle Studies

Care of Magical Creatures

Divination

Please, put some thought while picking your electives, because once the classes start, it will not be easy to change your classes.

We await your owl by no latter than July 31.

Yours sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall,

Deputy Headmistress

It seemed that another, more immediate problem, begged for Harry's attention. He gave the Hogwarts owl a treat and some water, while it was resting in Hedwig's cage. She was out again, and Harry had to wonder if she won't come back with a letter from Hermione. His friend probably got her letter first, and is at the moment thinking hard about what she is going to take. He just shook his head at another ramble-letter that he was bound to get some time in the future, and turned back to his own choices.

Harry already talked in length about different subjects now taught at Hogwarts, but never talking which would be good to learn sometime in the future. Muggle Studies and Care of Magical Creatures were immediately off his list, but for two separate reasons. He obviously didn't need Muggle Studies, but he would certainly take Care of Magical Creatures. Herbology was a core class because most ingredients for potions came from plants. But a big share also came from animals. Even without that, fauna of magical world was so different from common animals, that it was certainly good to know which animals were safe to be around, and how to protect yourself from more violent ones.

Divination, the ancient art of predicting future from cards, tea-leaves and crystal balls was in constant state of decline from when wizards came upon Arithmancy. Most wizards treated it as only that, a more probable way to predict future, but the truth was that it was more like Mathematics than simply Numerology. Math is an essential part of many different disciplines of life, but as wizards base their theories on magical energy, they need only Arithamncy to describe them all.

Simply said, Arithmancy is a way to describe every, even most complicated, pattern that occur in the world in as a solid equation. What muggle's call Numerology is only a set of Arithantical

equations which describe relations between physical objects and living things. That's why you can find out persons character, knowing by what planets, or more exactly, their magical energies, was that person affected during their growth. But Arithmancy is much more than that, since there are more equations describing pretty much every part of life. Most ritual circles or even wand patters were derived from Arithmantical equations, describing that particular shape for best flow of magic.

Study of Ancient Runes on the other hand, is concerned with language that is used to fill in those patterns, though after one of talks with Salazar, Harry came to conclusion that they should change the course name to Magic Symbols. In Slytherin times there were people who still used runes as actual way to write, since those languages were not so much dead at the time. Of course, magic meaning tied to them could be also blamed on wizards who used stones with words written in runes on them to communicate with their magic. But nowadays, runes were only symbols, and only reason why they are still being used, is because they were used thus far. It was quite easy to adapt Arithmantical equations to a different language, even if it would be english. The only problem with that, is convenience. All the books would have to be corrected, and people doing magic today, would have to relearn everything they know in new system. Given all that, and many more problems along the way, everyone that had that initial idea quickly lost their enthusiasm. Thus, even a thousand years later wizards used the same system.

Harry summarised his thoughts, got that mischievous smile on his, and sent his response with Hogwarts owl, which by now was ready to go. His choice would certainly ruffle couple feathers.

If you somehow got an idea that I'm J. K. Rowling, then you should switch off "Insinuation" option in your life and go back to reality, because I'm not the owner of Harry Potter series.

AN. She's back! She's back! EnjoyEveryMoment is back! Yes, you heard me right. She's back! *yells while bouncing all over the place and wagging his tail* *stops* *looks at his tail* Why exactly do I have a tail? Tail: *twitch* Me:Really? Tail:*sway* Me:Well, that explains a lot... but where was I? Tail:*wiggle* Me:You're right... She's back! She's back! *starts yelling and jumping all over the place* Tail:*wag*wag*wag*

By now, to Harry, train ride to Hogwarts was like a well choreographed dance amongst the chaos called his classmates. He met with his friends at the station, together they stow their trunks in last compartment, which at this point could be called theirs. Then they spent time talking with their families until it's time to go. Of course, even best performers, who did their routine thousands of times, have moments when their execution isn't quite as perfect as they would've liked.

This year Harry took Knight Bus instead of troubling his uncle with the journey to London. As a result, he came even earlier than usual, and knew that it would be some time before anyone else got to the station. Not minding it much, he simply grabbed his trunk and went for their usual compartment. Only when he stumbled through the door, trying to pull his trunk behind him, did he notice that it was already occupied.

"Let me help you with that," said voice right behind him, as he was sitting on the floor, with his trunk jammed in the doorway.

He noticed a man standing in the compartment. He was dressed in worn-out robes, with patches visible in couple of places. Even though he seemed quite young, he had that tired feel about him, which him looking ill, and those flecks of grey in his hair, did nothing to placate.

"Ah, hello Harry," the man said, after getting a closer look at him.

"Hello, Professor R. J. Lupin."

Lupin got that confused look on his face, probably thinking from where Harry might have known him. Harry quickly pointed to his suitcase, which had professors name written on it in fading letters, not wanting to tell the man that he had stumbled upon his name on few occasions during his quest for information. That seemed to be enough for the man, and he grabbed Harry by the arm, hoisting him to his feet, giving him a sudden jolt. After he was on his feet, together they placed his trunk on the rack.

"Now if you'll excuse me, I had a rough night, and would like to catch some sleep," Lupin said after the job was done. Harry just nodded, taking his seat.

Truthfully, he wasn't even paying attention, too preoccupied with that jolt he got when Remus picked him off the floor. It wasn't a shock from being picked up. It was something closer to when your arm automatically jerks off from some kind of danger. It was like he had his hand right in the jaws of a snarling wolf...

Harry's thought quickly caught on to that strange feeling he had while meeting Sirius Black. Now this with Remus Lupin. He had to wonder if every friend of his father had that strange feel to them. Probably he would never know, since Peter Petigrew was dead. He had to chuckle at the thought that if he suddenly came back from the dead, it would certainly have a strange feel to it.

But now he was sitting in one compartment with Remus Lupin, new Defence Against the Dark Arts professor, friend of his father... a werewolf. Harry read about werewolf's in first year, when he was reading everything about magic world that he could. Between what he knew and information in the papers, there were enough hints that he could make an educated guess regarding Lupins "rough nights".

No matter what muggles imagined, being a werewolf was no piece of a cake. Yes, you got more strength, stamina, slightly sharper senses and only transformed in full moon, once every month. But "wolfs curse" like come called it, wasn't mainly a physical condition. The worst of it affected the mind.

Werewolves look differently from normal wolves because of the human part. What no one can see though, is what goes on in the mind of the affected person. In the mind of every werewolf there is a constant struggle between man and wolf. And in a quite literal sense.

The reason why in full moon werewolves act so violently, is because of that fight for domination, to see who is strongest and who have right to control the body, which have stopped the transformation half way between man and animal shape. Body on the other hand, not knowing what to do with its mind busy, follows the only signal that comes forward. Anger, rage and violence.

Wolfsbane potion drunk right before full moon, can keep the inner wolf sedated, allowing human to win over the beast and keep his senses, even when the body still goes through with the transformation. The problem is, wolfsbane potion can be administered ONLY before full moon. For the rest of the month werewolf is left to struggle against the whispers in his mind, wolf lurking right under his skin, and that constant thought to do harm to others.

That's why the population of werewolves is low. Not because of wizards efforts to find cure. It's just not many people who were bitten can go on living like that. Some instantly go mad, or just loose to the wolf, never again regaining human shape. Others, even if they get through transformation couple of times, can't stand the thought of living on, and choose a blissful escape into non-existence. That leaves two groups of people that do live on. One group is like Remus, just living day by day, finding something to keep them anchored, give them strenght to fight on. Second though, they are too much like wolves them-self, prone to violence, that it might be that they don't even notice.

Of course, nobody in wizarding world would ask werewolf what exactly goes on it his head, and Harry only know because of Salazar.

FLASHBACK

"You can question my ways of teaching you, but you must understand that it's essential to know the world around you, your place in it, and what repercussions the things you do have." Slytherin told him some time after he got settled in his new house at the moor near the city.

"As a proof, listen to this." he said, settling in for a longer story. "Like I told you once, in my times wizards were mostly experimenting with magic. At one point, someone came up with idea of experimenting on animals. You could change their shape with transfiguration, use

them in a fight, you could do many things. But that wasn't what that someone had in mind. He tried to play God. He had that idea to help them evolve, to make them human like, to create new, better, human being. So he picked wolves and went to work..."

"Why wolves?" Harry interrupted.

"They were like lab-rats are now." at this point he was used to hearing Salazar talk with references to modern world, information possessed from other inhabitants of the city. "There was a lot of them in the woods, and we could determine sick wolf from healthy one much faster than with rats. Rats were always regarded as plague-bearers. But where was I... Yes, he picked wolves and went to work. Potions, rituals, charms. I don't even know what exactly was used on them, but it didn't went as he planed. Yes, they changed, they gained intelligence, but as his work progressed they also became more violent. Maybe it was just that they saw what was being done to them, and they didn't liked it..." Salazar trailed off, while just staring back into space.

"I remember getting to the town where he lived, seeing all homes burning, every inhabitant of the town torn to pieces. Only him, the ambitious wizard, was spared, pined to place against his house wall, probably made to watch the entire thing."

"So, that's where werewolves came from?"

"In my times they were called Lycanthrope's, from Greek, language being quite popular with scholars of my time. But do you know from where comes the name you just mentioned?"

Harry thought a while, but eventually shook his head.

"Maybe it was just by chance, but when we were taking him out to heal him, someone asked the wizard who was experimenting on wolves "Who could have done such a thing" while looking at the slaughtered village. The wizard replied "Once... they were-wolves.". I guess no one really expected that that condition will spread..."

From that moment Harry understood why Ministry law, derived from old passages, named Werewolves as Dark Creatures first and foremost, not a person that they were throughout most of the month.

END OF FLASHBACK

"Do you mind?" a voice brought him out of his thoughts, and he saw Hermione struggling with her trunk. He quickly got up to help his friend, at the same time explaining that new professor will be travelling with them. But as he sat down, something brushed against his leg. He looked at the floor, only to come face to face with a cat that might have just run head long into a brick wall. Harry picked the ginger -coloured cat.

"Oh, that's Crookshanks. I bought him just this summer," Hermione piped in.

Harry settled the cat in his lap, and started petting it, only to be interrupted by a loud screech. Hedwig flown from her open cage to the seat next to Harry's, with her wings spread out and beak opened in threatening way. Crookshanks jumped off of his lap, sat in front of the owl, and run his paw over his head couple of times, like he was bathing himself. Hedwig settled down, and after looking at the cat for a while, flew to Harry's shoulder, and started rubbing her head against his cheek. As if on cue, Crookshanks jumped across the compartment and settled on Hermione's lap. Harry petted Hedwig, and couldn't stop but chuckle at Hermione's perplexed face.

"At last I won't be the only one," he said after a moment.

"The only one?" Hermione asked, still fighting her bewilderment.

"Everyone tells me how smart Hedwig is. Well, now you have an intelligent cat." Hermione just frowned at him.

"Come on, it's simple. Hedwig yelled at Crookshanks because I was petting him. He responded that he just want to be scratched. She showed him that I'm going to pet her first, so he replied that he won't bother me if she don't like it, because he still have you," Harry said with a smile.

Hermione thought about it for a while, then just shook her head.

"I didn't knew that your second name was Tarzan," she said, smirking.

"Me Tarzan, you Jane?" Harry replied, doing a poor imitation of the scene.

Hermione just huffed, but after a while "Jean," she grumbled. Of course, that just made Harry pretend to learn how to say her name, just like Tarzan did.

"But seriously. Reading animals isn't that hard." Harry said when the joke was beginning to get old. "And as for that talk about domesticated animals, sometimes I have a feeling that more correctly would be to say that Hedwig domesticated me." he said, and at that moment Hedwig reminded him that she was waiting to be scratched.

"So, what subjects did you pick?" Harry asked after a moment of silence. "But don't tell me that you took all of them." he added, smiling at his studious friend who blushed.

"I wanted to, but after some thought I scratched off Muggle Studies, since I don't need them, and Divination, since I'm going learn Arithmancy. My schedule will be full enough, and to take those two, Professor McGonagall told me I would have to..." she trailed off. "Well, it's just not worth it." she finished instead. "But what have you taken?" Harry somehow thought that she wanted to admit something, but didn't question it.

"I'm taking Care and Divination." Hermione just stared at him. "What?"

"Why are you taking Divination?" she asked, still staring at him incredulously.

"You know muggle superstitions. There is always some kind of story behind it all. Like, how walking under the ladder can bring you bad luck. It can just be associated, that there could be someone working on the ladder, and if you go under it, it is indeed a bad luck to get hit with a hammer, or can of paint that someone on the ladder could drop. Thinking of it that way, Divination is only form of wizarding culture studies that there is in Hogwarts at this moment."

That seemed to calm her down, but it wasn't entire truth about why he picked Divination. Once Divination was only way to predict future, and not because there was no other way. It was because once, it

was as precise, or even sometimes better, as Arithmancy is now. While Arithmancy concentrate on picking out patterns and forming equations that work in every case, different forms of divination were formed to respond to one person, and one person only. The main reason that it wasn't working so well now, was because it was designed as a form of wandless magic.

Reading from hand, cards, tea-leaves, was affected by persons magical aura. Mage skilled in divination could swiftly read through problems that person had, cards or leaves being only medium to channel one form of magic into another. Crystall ball reading, was something closer to Arithmancy, because it showed the way energies were most probable to go. Chance so sure, that it nearly formed into something you could already experience. Oracles though, were something not quite understood, even now. It wasn't exactly known what triggered prophecies. Was it some deity, life energy of people affected, screaming through space and time, or just very powerful wizard capable of seeing into the future. What was known though, is that prophecies always appeared in times of distress.

But even if there wasn't many wizards who were capable of wandless magic, there were still signs in the world, small changes that hid itself in statistical error of Arithmancy, showing that something was coming. Words of Slytherin that "Wizards knew more than appeared on first sight" still rung in Harry's mind.

Some time after Hermione let him off the hook, Neville appeared in their compartment, closely followed by Luna, and once they settled in, it wasn't long before the train started its journey. It was uneventful, with small chitchat over snacks they bought from the food cart.

But at some point, the train came to abrupt halt, all lights went off. When the demon of Azkaban prison appeared, everything happened in an instance. It sucked up a deep breath, sending cold over everyone inside, and for Harry, time seemed to stop. He had that general idea that he was falling to the floor, although it seemed that gravity wasn't working right. As he was guarding his face from the strange coldness with his hands, he saw Magie standing between him and dementor, her arms spread wide, screaming at the thing to leave him alone. He was worried what might have happen to her, until he saw Lupin stepping into the picture, and send something silvery at the cloaked figure. At this point, Harry didn't knew if he

was dreaming or still awake, because his hands seemed to glow faintly, something his slipping consciousness might mistake as a reflection from that silvery thing.

'No, I must be dreaming. Because if I'm not, that ragged dementor's breath have a slight melodic ring to it,' was the last thing Harry thought before darkness overwhelmed him.

People call me by a number of names, but J. K. Rowling isn't one of them...

AN. Like always, EnjoyEveryMoment is with me... NO! You can't have her! She's mine! All mine! My... preciousss...

EnjoyEveryMoment standing off to the side: *sigh* *shake head* "Just look at him... You give him a rusted key-ring and he goes nuts..."

He wasn't unconscious for very long, and after the "incident", the rest of the journey to Hogwarts went by in a flash. But it wasn't because of the speed of the train, or proximity to the end of their ride. It was mostly because Harry's mind was still occupied with what he saw.

Someone standing in front of him; a woman's voice, screaming. A dark silhouette. A flash of light. Silence. And finally, overwhelming darkness...

It must have been a dream. He couldn't come up with one situation he remembered that would play a part in this pattern. He must have imagined it, maybe had too much sugar than was healthy. But if so, why was he having that deja vu feeling revolving around exactly that chain of events?

He kept thinking about it, chasing the elusive answer, not paying attention to the rest of the ride, the sorting, the magnificent feast. His mind was buzzing even when he was in his four poster bed, still wondering if the vision was real or not. But when he fell asleep, his mind chose for him, mixing his thoughts with another dream that he couldn't remember when he awoke.

Harry woke up with that feeling that he had forgotten something important. Normally, he would just settle on waiting until it came back on it's own, but this time it just wouldn't leave him alone. It was like that kind of itch right in the middle of your back. You know that it's pointless to try and reach, but it's too infuriating just to not try and scratch it.

Fortunately, he found a distraction in the Great Hall, where he found himself walking out of habit. It seemed that Hogwart's gossip mill was working as efficiently as ever, because right when he appeared

in the doorway, Malfoy did a ridiculous impression of a swooning fit and there was a roar of laughter. Passing by, he caught on that it was supposed to be him, fainting, and just shook his head at Draco's lack of acting skills. He took his usual place at the Gryffindor table and busied himself with breakfast.

All around him, and not only at Gryffindor table, people were watching him, waiting for his response to the joke Slytherin's were enjoying at his expense. But it seemed that he was content in ignoring the whole affair. After a while, people started to exchange looks, some shrugging at his inaction, and one after another, they went back to their own food.

It wasn't until Pansy Parkinson started shouting at Harry that Dementors were coming, that he threw his fork on the table and stormed out of the Great Hall. It puzzled most people, and started another round of laughter in the group of Slytherin's. But whatever number of reactions was there when Harry made his exit, there was only one when the temperature in the room dropped just couple of minutes later. That reaction was horror.

It was early in the morning, not many people were in the hall, and none of the teachers. So everyone present stared in mute shock, helplessly sitting there as a dark form appeared at the threshold of Great Hall. Dark, long, ripped cloak. Loud, ragged breaths, bringing biting coldness with every second that passed. Everyone stopped breathing, watching as it glided along the Great Hall, stopping right behind Malfoy and his group of Slytherins, who were too terrified to even move. Figure rised its arm, and just at the moment when the sleeve was about to reveal that hideous, decaying hand, the shape doubled over, coughing. Whatever thoughts people present had had died instantly. Why would that demonic creature suddenly burst into a hysteric coughing fit?

It was answered when the cloaked figure got control of it's body again, and came up for a breath so suddenly, that the hood it was wearing came of, only to reveal... Harry Potter.

"Hi, I was wondering if by chance I haven't left my cough medicine here," Harry said in that wheezing, ragged tone of voice. "Had too many ice-creams," he added, while bending and retrieving a non descriptive canister from under Malfoy's seat.

"Thanks. Now I only need to get rid of those before another wave of first years will try to rip me apart," he said while opening his tattered robes, and all muggle-borns nearest to Harry quickly recognised a cool-box hanging near his stomach, from which cold vapours were oozing out.

Harry quickly got his skateboard, that now with his robes opened was visible, moving, and did a lap around the hall throwing real ice-cream at the tables, screaming "Ice-cream, ice-cream, we all scream for ice-cream," in that wheezing kind of voice. When he was gone, people slowly regained ability to think, looked at the ice-cream laying around the hall, and after they turned to still stupefied Slytherin's, burst out laughing so loud, that teachers came running, expecting some kind of disaster. For at least a while, no one could think of a dementor and not crack a smile.

Divination class brought confusion to Harry's mind. It looked exactly what he thought it would be. The look of a home of a mystical witch, with instruments for reading the future, at which point you would wiggle your fingers and widen your eyes. The teacher spoke in misty tones about the glimpses of the future that she obtained, making you feel like she shared a great secret with you. But when it came to educational values, it was a big pile of rubbish.

Even just a notion of PRECISE guide to reading signs of the future was absurd. How seeing one shape could determine your whole day, week or even month of life. If anything, it would be more precise to judge from whole set of signs, making out what exact situation came from that particular configuration. Even more, just watching pictures lacked context. It was like saying that every tree in the world made the same pattern on the surface of the earth when it's leaves were falling, without even mentioning different weather, air currents or topography. Another problem with just reading off pictures was with translation. Where one would see a dog, someone else would say it's a wolf. A hand can be raised in surrender or extended to grab something.

Yes, predictions were possible, but not the way Divination class proposed. It wasn't enough to sit with a book and simply change Sign A to Meaning A, Sign B to Meaning B and so on until meaning surfaces. Even Professor Sybill Trelawney herself, said that not many have gift in that particular field of magic.

Harry didn't know what annoyed him so. Fumes in the classroom which were slowly making him sick. His inability to gather his thoughts. Reappearance of that feeling that there was something more important he should have been thinking about. Or that his teacher wasn't the most sober or sane person he had ever met.

It may be that it was all of those, and in retrospection, he might have overdid it, but when it was time for them to read a future from tea leaves, he looked in the cup he was holding, got that wide eyed expression on his face, jumped to his feet and begun running from one table to the other, frantically looking through the different cups.

"Child, what has gotten into you?" said Sybill Trelawney, correcting her shawls.

"I..." Harry started in a panicked voice, looking through cup he was holding. "I think we are in a immediate danger of an avalanche made of... marbles."

Everyone turned to him like he finally lost his marbles.

"Yes, yes... Go on child, don't stop, don't fight the signs..." Sybill was saying, going quickly to Harry's side, to look through his observations.

Unfortunately she haven't noticed that Magie hooked one of her shawls on one particular shelf. So, while she was rushing through the room, the shawl stopped her abruptly, and she ended laying on the floor. That tug was enough to tip the self forward, and dozens of crystal balls came falling forward, rolling through the room, catching the professor in it's flow, and carying her through the only exit from the tower. Everyone's jaws hit the floor at the exact moment when sound of Sybill Trelawney and couple of dozen crystal balls hit the landing under the classroom. Fortunately, Magie was kind enough to cushion that particular spot on the floor.

"Well, I must work on reading the scale of things," everyone turned to Harry who was still looking at the tea-leaves. "But if those weren't marble's," he said while twisting the cup, "I guess this isn't a toothpick either."

At that exact moment silver ladder leading up to the room unattached inself, and ended up laying on top of the pile.

Next class was transfiguration, with the hot topic of Animagi. He listened carefully, thinking it would be fun to try out with Magie, but what confused him was when Professor McGonagall transformed into a tabby cat. Moments later she was herself again.

"What's the matter with all of you?" she began, not understanding why no one paid attention pretty much from the beginning of the lesson. That of course sent entire class into a recollection of Divination they just had. While listening to it, Professor McGonagall settled into a grimace, something between scowl and smile, if there would be anyone to confirm what her smile looked like.

It was fortunate too, because that bit of distraction nicely covered his own, more private, conversation. Because there, at the front of the class, stood Magie, hand still raised, half extended. She was that way from the moment when the tabby cat appeared in the classroom.

'What is it?' asked Harry.

'I told you once already.' she responded, staring at her own hand, trying to understand.

Harry stopped, thought about what she might have told him, and moments later it hit him full in the face like a sack of Professor Trelawny's seeing balls.

'You felt like you could touch her?' All he got in response was a slight nod.

He too, just sat there, staring at her hand, because it was exactly like the other time. Only difference was that then it was with big black dog. But except of that, it was just like the other night... The night when he met Sirius Black.

The highlight of the day was Care of Magical Creatures class. At first, it was scary to think about Hagrid, with his love to dangerous animals, teaching a class. The hippogriff he provided wasn't too reassuring in this case. But with Hagrid's careful guidance, he got himself a ticket for a flight. Harry loved to fly. It helped clearing his head, leaving all his doubts on the ground, and concentrating only on the goal. The Snitch. This flight was more uneven than the one on

a broom, and there wasn't a snitch to be caught, but still it was a nice flight, and companionship wasn't half bad.

Of course, once back on the ground, his troubles came back with a vengeance. So as he was standing there, petting Buckbeak, he could see Draco Malfoy pushing his way to the front. Harry just shook his head, thinking that the blond Slytherin just had to show what he was worth, after this mornings encounter in the Great Hall. Surely, nothing good would come out of his rash actions.

'Oh, Trippy!' he softly called in his mind.

Out of the bushes at the edge of the clearing bound a certain black cat, stopped at a slight rock not far from Harry, and started washing himself. Unfortunately for Draco, the rock was right in the path he was going, and he stumbled, falling face first into the earth, while the cat run off with a loud hiss.

The name for Magie's cat wasn't such a hard thing to produce. He would constantly loaf around someone's feet, trying to rub against their legs. From the moment he appeared in the town, number of cases including scrapped knees and hands was growing exponentially.

Everyone laughed at Malfoy's expense, since it looked like he tripped on simple rock. And so, whilst Hagrid got in his professor mode and hauled the blond Slytherin by the scruff of his neck, deducing points and handing out detention for disregarding teachers instructions, Harry just shook his head at the fate of the ill named cat.

AN. Just a quick chapter to get through first day of class. If nothing will come up, next one should be as usual, somewhere in the weekend.

If at this point you still believe that I'm the owner of Harry Potter, you should go see a doctor and check yourself for mental illnesses.

AN. Okay. Don't worry about me. I'm fine again. I was lucky that EnjoyEveryMoment was at hand to help me take my medications...

On their first Defence Against the Dark Arts lesson in the 3rd year, the entire class had to wait for the teacher. Sitting there, Harry had to ask about something he had missed earlier.

"Why exactly do we have a new teacher this year?" he asked the bushy haired girl beside him, scrunching his eyebrows together.

"Didn't you listen at all to the opening speech Professor Dumbledore made this year?" Hermione retorted, annoyed that Harry would so easily dismiss Headmaster's words.

"No, not really," Harry said sheepishly, making Hermione huff in exasperation. He could feel his cheeks redden slightly, but then again, did anyone apart from his bookworm friend really listen to the speech anyway?

"As the Headmaster said, "Lockhart's deed's for magical community are great, but his flamboyant teaching style does not do well for this tradition filled institution...". Then Professor Dumbledore introduced Professor Lupin."

"Flamboyant teaching style?" Harry asked, already grinning.

"Those scenes he made you do? Valentines day? That gigantic Easter bunny... Ring any bells?"

"Well, if a gigantic bunny would ring bells, I would certainly hear about that wouldn't I?"

Hermione had just enough time to slap him on the shoulder and hide her smile when Professor Lupin entered the classroom. To everyone's surprise and delight he announced that this would be practical lesson. If not counting that one class with pixies set loose, up until now they were taught Defence like little children are taught riding a bicycle, with their training wheels on. So everyone followed Professor Lupin, who was gaining their respect more and more, first swiftly dealing with Peeves and later having conversation with

Snape and looking like he enjoyed it. Of course, Neville quickly changed his mind about their new teacher, when it was made known that he will be the one to go first against anything prepared for today. Moments later it turned out that they will be studying Boggarts.

The lecture went swiftly, with Professor Lupin asking questions, then adding more details and facts to students' answers. But when Harry answered question regarding why it's better to have company while encountering Boggarts, he had to ask one of his own.

"Professor, has anyone ever tried to put two Boggarts in one wardrobe or any other closed off space?"

Everyone stopped, with memories of Divination class fresh in their minds, not knowing if they would like it or not.

"No, I don't think so," Remus said after a while of thought. "But why would you do that?"

"Well, if they really take shape of whatever scares the other person off, we could observe what they would change to encountering each other. We would then know if every Boggart is the same, or each one is scared of different thing. Or maybe even we could see their real form..." Harry trailed off.

"Why would we see their real form?" Lupin asked, intrigued.

"Well, we know that they like dark places and run away from laughter. We also know that they take shape of anything that scares people away. But what if we're mistaken that it's a attack mechanism. Maybe it's a defensive one?"

"Go on." Remus said, indicating that he was following his train of thoughts.

"What if Boggarts aren't mean spirits trying to scare you to death, just an antisocial being wanting to be left alone and not liking being laughed at," Everyone present blinked, dumbfounded. "I mean, what if they actually look quite funny, and they don't like it, so they snap back at anyone laughing at them, and try to chase that person away. You know, like you're upset and don't want to see anyone, you hide

somewhere to be all alone." No one had any comments, because surprisingly, it made a lot of sense.

"Well, I don't think anyone have ever thought about it like that before..." said Professor Lupin bringing everyone to here and now. "But since we don't know that, I still need to teach you how to defend yourself in case you encounter one." Then he went on to explain how to deal with Boggarts using simple spell and a little bit of imagination.

Neville didn't feel all that secure. He was meant to go first, and even if he was told what exactly he was meant to do, just dress Snape as his grandmother, he was too terrified simply thinking about Snape to imagine himself doing it in real. Harry seeing the state his friend was in, came to his side to exchange couple of quick words.

"Harry, I don't think I can do this," Neville said, while skipping from one foot to the other, like he was trying to run away while still staying in one place.

"What can't you do?"

"I can't go first. When I do something first, it always goes wrong..."

"Then be wrong," Harry said, and Neville only stared at him. "You know, when you see something scary, it's scary. But then people try to make it scarier, and add things to it. But at one point when you add one thing too much, go one step too far, it isn't scary any more. It's grotesque. It's simply wrong. Since you are wrong on your first try, it's a perfect occasion for you. Just remember that any mistake you do, will cause a laugh at Snape's expense."

At that exact moment Neville was called to the front of the class, and moments later Boggart was sent loose. Menacing form of Severus Snape came forth, but Neville was calmer, much calmer, and when the Potions Professor came closer, he simply raised his wand and said the spell. Snape stood there, wearing a long, lace-trimmed dress and a towering hat topped with a moth-eaten vulture, and he was swinging a huge crimson handbag. Everyone laughed at the image, but it was when Boggart tried to imitate Snape silencing the class, it turned out that Neville truly took his gloves off.

"Quiet children. It will be impossible for you to learn anything with this noise, " the bogus Potions Master said in a voice fitting a chipmunk. After that, he made a perfect lecture in the art of ballet, going through five positions, covering demi and grand plie, with the grand finale of arabesque penchée and Fouetté en tournant. All done by Severus Snape speaking like a chipmunk and still dressed in Neville's grandmother's clothes.

People were doubled with laughter, some rolling on the floor with tears rolling from their eyes, but Boggart still kept going, compelled by magic to finish it's nearly 5 minute monologue supplied by Neville's mind. Even Professor Lupin was having so much fun that he nearly forgot to call another person.

Paravati was caught off guard being called to the front, but she managed to deal with her mummy. Everyone who followed had a while to ask Harry what he told Neville to do, and he simply repeated the same thing over and over again. Soon, entire encounter with Boggart changed to "Creepy Horror's Show" with everyone trying to make their own fear the main event.

Seamus Finigan instead of making the Banshee that appeared before him mute, he made her use Michigan J. Frog's voice to sing snippets from collection of his songs, "Hello, My Baby" being sung twice, thanks to the great applause of the audience.

Rats were made to do a real Rat-race, with miniature cars wheezing around proportional stadium, and rat announcers doing commentary in their squeaky rat voices.

A bloodied eyeball was thrown on roulette table, with everyone placing bets.

A severed hand trying to creep all over Dean had to wear a tuxedo and shoes while it did a tap-dancing performance.

A spider attacking Ron lost it's legs, it's carapace was entwined in it's own web until it ended as a smooth ball. What commenced was strangest football game in the world, with spider legs playing four on four, and fact that Ron still haven't caught on to all of the rules just added to the absurd, chaotic moment.

Remus Lupin stood off to the side, watching as the fun went along. At first thought, he was absolutely against letting Harry deal with Boggart. But now, watching what people accomplished thanks to his simple advice, he thought that Lord Voldemort being dealt with in a funny way could do more good than harm. So, when the Boggart-ball was kicked right in front of Harry, Remus stopped himself from intervening.

In fact, he wasn't the only one to stop. All laughter ceased, and everyone in the room stood still, watching Harry's worst fear. But they weren't scared, more confused. Even Harry himself hadn't expected it. Spending time talking to others, he had no time to think about his worst fear. But whatever he might have come up with, was nothing like he was watching right now.

In the centre of the room, right in front of him, stood a girl, looking approximately eleven years old, with hair colour stuck somewhere between light brown and dark blond, and her sky blue eyes were fixed on his green ones.

"Hi, Harry." said bogus Magie.

It seemed to bring him out of his stupor. He quickly glanced around, and saw that everyone was watching the exchange, wondering why that girl would be Harry's worst fear. He couldn't believe that he found himself in this kind of situation, but still, he raised his hand, and so did she. But in the moment when they were about to touch, her entire body dissolved, ending as nothing more as a pile of dust.

While everyone wondered what was going on, he understood. He wasn't afraid of Magie. Not even scared that someone will know of her, since it was bound to be, no matter how far from now. But he was scared that when it will happen that someone will have a proof that it was a lie. Nothing more than his imagination, delusions, maybe some kind of mental disease, and even then it wasn't about him. He was scared that Magie might vanish for good. He was scared of losing...

His musings were interrupted by a sound of vacuum cleaner. His head snapped up, only to see Magie strolling around with a vacuum cleaner, trying to clean up all the dust from the floor.

'Sorry for bothering you, but I'm trying to put myself together again,' he heard in his mind, and instantly knew that she was the real thing. 'Don't look at me like that, I know that at the moment I'm being...' she trailed off, snapping her fingers in annoyance that she forgot the word.

"Ridiculous," Harry said out loud with a slight chuckle.

It made the Boggart to reform itself as a Magie's doppelgänger, only to dissolve into another dust cloud when Magie came with a dust sweeper.

'Let's have some fun,' Harry said, at last coming out of his shock. Magie just grinned at that.

Everyone in the room understood less and less with every passing minute, as the Boggart spent next five minutes going through entire evolution process. At first being the girl, then sprouting wings and changing into a butterfly which in turn took shape of a colourful kite, then a plane, a bird, then chicken going backwards in time ending as an egg which was turned into an omelet... It went through more and more transformations as Magie and Harry played their mind ping-pong game. At some point Boggart couldn't keep up, and simply burst into a thousand tiny wisps of smoke, and was gone at the exact same moment when the bell rung. Everyone stood there, still staring at the place where Boggart was, as Harry just took his things and left.

Moments later Hermione and Neville went after him, but when they caught up to him, he was standing by window, just staring off in space. Maybe that wasn't most peculiar, since they could see him doing it quite a lot, but now they noticed something else. That look in his eyes that they haven't noticed before, and seen only on one other person. Luna.

"Harry?" Hermione said softly while coming closer and putting a hand on his shoulder. He blinked, shook his head, and the look was gone.

"Hmm?" he responded, stopping when he noticed how they were looking at him. "What?" he asked again, this time being more conscious of eye staring at him.

"What was that in... you know, in the classroom?" Neville asked. Hermione just stood there, observing him.

"I was checking something out."

"What exactly?"

"If Boggart changes into your worst fear, or what at the moment you think is your worst fear... It turns out you can change your mind." He said with a shrug, and went on ahead.

Neville and Hermione stood there, thinking that there was something more to it, but they didn't bother him with that. Still, Hermione kept thinking that even if Harry was telling the truth, it didn't explain the first thing that showed up, and why Harry would be taken aback by that little girl.

If you would answer Millionaire question about owner of Harry Potter series by giving my name, I tell you for sure that you wouldn't have won.

AN. Existence of Harry's little Slytherin "inner agent" is all thanks to EnjoyEveryMoment. I might have wrote it, but she supplied the inspiration...

Harry had quite a few things to think about. Subjects differing from school-work and his friends to personal stuff, like having weird dream-like visions that he couldn't quite catch. That, or a crazed godfather who escaped from hell on earth and was out there, just waiting to kill him, being just few examples to mention. That's why he was doing trips all around the castle, just pacing the common room absolutely pointless in his mind, since it lacked purpose, and those walks across the halls gave him opportunity to learn exact places that were shown in Marauder's Map.

'So, what exactly do you know about animagi?' Harry asked during one of his walks. It was more than a week after Professor McGonagall's lecture that Harry remembered that he still had his mentor to talk to, so busy his mind was.

'As you know, as complicated form of life human being is, body is nothing compared to the chaos that is the mind. There are many way's to group the complexities, but let's concentrate on how people see their personalities. Examples are quite crude, never perfect, oversimplifying the problems, but for the sake of quick explanation, let's use one.' Salazar said, putting his updated knowledge to good use.

'Let's imagine that inside every human being live three people... at least three,' Slytherin added with a quiet chuckle. 'One is the person who someone think he is. Other is the person someone would like to be. Last one is the person that someone truly is. While the two first one's are known, the third one remains hidden, maybe never to be found. Animals on the other hand don't have to struggle with their own thoughts. When there is a danger, they simply react. Now, that third, hidden, person is you at your best, a person you become dealing with, maybe not dangerous, but life-altering situations. Animal you can change to is defined by that third person. Will you run, hide or strike back when confronted with danger, and in what way would you do it. Going step further with this knowledge, wizards

can don the animal skin, further limiting their confused mind. But knowledge of yourself can be enough to help you follow your instinct, saving those precious moments distinguishing close success from devastating catastrophe.'

'I understand this far, but how...' Harry's question stopped at his lips, his thoughts vanishing to the back of his mind along with Salazar, just as he stepped into one of the new-found short-cuts.

The thing that stopped him in his tracks was not dangerous, or even especially sudden. It was just surprisingly uncommon in his life. A sound of quiet weeping, accompanied with sniffs resounding throughout otherwise silent passage. After a quick look-around, he could make out a small figure sitting on the floor, huddled under one of the walls. Coming closer, he could catch the form of a small girl in the dim light of the passage. She had blond hair and blue eyes, her face and physique would certainly change with age, but for now, one could mistake her for smaller version of Luna, maybe even a sister, if you took away some of Luna's unique attributes. The one mayor difference between them at this moment would be clothes, since this girl wore Slytherin colours.

"Hello," Harry said stepping a little closer, at which the young girl stiffened. "Just who might you be?"

Obviously she was startled at being found out, and it took her a while to make her tear stained face presentable again, but when she did and turned to respond, her eyes got as wide as saucers and she stuttered for a while before regaining her voice.

"Harry Potter..." she whispered, not believing her UFO shape eyes.

"Hey! I'm Harry Potter too! What a small world it is," Harry responded in his best jovial voice. For a while the girl frowned at him, and after remembering what he exactly asked, it turned into a scowl.

"That's not exactly funny, you know. I would rather call it... lame," she said, while scrunching her nose.

"Oh, pardon me if my kind of humour isn't to your liking, milady," he said with a slight bow. "Let me just ask then, what such a sunny spirit as yourself does in this kind of place?" This short speech actually got a slight smile out of her, before she heaved a deep sight

and returned to her quiet self. Harry just settled himself under the wall across the girl.

"I don't like it here," she said eventually. Harry just sat there, giving her space, and after a while, she began to tell about herself.

Her name was Rose Priming, a daughter of pure-blood witch and a muggle. She knew about magic from as long as she remembered, heard stories of a fabulous castle and wonders within. She dreamed of the time when she would travel to it and see it for herself. But nowhere in her fantasies was she sorted into Slytherin.

It wasn't like Slytherin was made only out of pure-blood's, student's of muggle upbringing weren't as uncommon as people thought it to be. But from whatever family people sorted into that house would be, they all shared pretty much similar mindset. They all were ambitious, ultimate power being their ultimate goal, and you could notice how sure they were they would achieve it, by how arrogantly they were acting.

That was the main problem Rose had with staying at Hogwarts. As many jokes there were about bold Gryffindors killing themselves off in duels, the really hate-filled house was Slytherin. Their constant struggle for dominance, calculative approach, moves done as to prolong the encounter so the enemy would be weakest and they at their strongest, doing nothing more than to postpone the final encounter indefinitely. That meant that every day you could feel the malevolence just hanging in the air.

"I'm not like that. I can't act like all of them, striding around, that constant pushing... I'm nothing of that kind." she said getting depressed, until she heard Harry chuckling quietly. "What are you laughing at?" she snapped, scowling again.

"I just thought that it's one of those situations when it's appropriate to say that 'If Slytherin saw what was happening with his house, he would have rolled in his grave'," Harry said, and he certainly knew that sentence to be true. "But still, no one is 'like everyone else'. Each and every person have the same traits in them. It's just that they have more of one trait, and while it's on the forefront, you might not notice all those lighter shades. Okay, I even have an example for you. Neville and Hermione are two friends of mine, both sorted into Gryffindor, but they're completely different. To stay in House's terms,

I would have to say that Neville is a Hufflepuff kind of Gryffindor. You know, he might not be best in everything, but he works hard to accomplish his goals and have his friends whenever he needs help. Hermione on the other hand is a Ravenclaw kind of Gryffindor. She studies a lot, have best scores you could imagine, and is curious about... well, everything. But they're not in Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw respectively, which simply shows that they're braver than they are hard working or studious... which is quite scary as I'm now thinking about it." he said, shuddering at the image of brave Hermione or fierce Neville, if they would have to show their best..

"Then what would you be?" Rose asked after a while.

"Oh, I'm a Slytherin kind of Gryffindor, boldly pushing people around, spreading my evil ways... Hey! I might even be a Gryffindor-ish kind of Slytherin, being brave enough to go behind enemy lines, picking them off one by one..." he said, and did his best evil laugh.

Rose just snorted. "Yeah, you being Slytherin. Right! It's well known that you hate Slytherin's."

Now it was Harry's time to snort. "And who told you that I hate Slytherins? I mean, some of the Hufflepuffs annoy me more than they do... at least a snake has some dignity, but a badger? And the way they sing "I'm walking on sunshine"... It's just sacrilege. " he said in a pompous kind of voice.

"Yeah, yeah," she dismissed his performance with a wave of her hand. "But you know, people talk..."

"No, I don't know. And do I know any of those people?" Harry asked, switching to being completely confused.

Rose stared at him for a while. "Okay, maybe people are wrong," she said with a shrug. "But that stunt you did the first day, or stories of you and Draco..."

"You omitted one important detail. I don't make fun of people as long as they don't come looking for trouble. If only Draco learnt once and for all to stay away... but if he's asking to make a fool out of himself, then why not help him along? And that means I don't like that particular Slytherin..." he responded.

"Another thing you forget is that House of Slytherin have other traits than ambition. So, tell me Little Miss Sunshine, are you cunning?" he asked. She shrugged indifferently, but a slight smile played on her lips, and that mischievous glint in her eyes told another tale altogether. "I thought as much."

Harry looked at her for a while, just thinking about their entire talk.

"You know, I think you will be perfect for House of Slytherin," he said eventually.

"How so?" she asked, watching him curiously.

"Just think about it. You are cunning, but not power hungry. That means that you can be most dangerous member of that House. While everyone else will be at their throats, fighting for dominance, you can play with their minds all you want. You can do practically anything you want, because you don't want to achieve anything beside just practice of your cunningness."

Rose just grinned more with his every word, quickly growing fond of the idea of staying in the castle. They talked for a while more before noticing the time. When they went their separate ways, Harry had just one more thing to tell her.

"Go give them hell."

Harry told Hermione and Neville about his encounter with the first year Slytherin, and they didn't even pester him about it beside Hermione's comment that it wasn't the only first year girl that he convinced to stay at the castle for just a while longer, which left Harry puzzled. Soon, they all begun to grow fond of her, as she would meet them here and there, always just for a scant amount of time, enough to exchange couple of words, but not to be spotted. It almost seemed as she would be a bird in flight.

By chance, one of those exchanges happened when their group was walking from library, and Ron couldn't help but notice it.

"What are you doing with that Slytherin?" he asked as soon as Rose was gone.

"Talking. Why you ask?" Harry asked, surprised at Ron's agitation.

"Because Slytherin's are evil!" he nearly hissed.

"Why would all of them be evil?"

"Because, you know, they're in Slytherin." Ron responded like it was obvious. By now they had gotten to the Great Hall and had taken their places.

"So, Slytherins are evil because they're Slytherins?" Harry just shook his head. "Ron, people aren't that simple. Labels are good for cans, at most. And I don't see cans put on those benches," he finished while glancing around the Hall. When he looked at Ron again, he was quite busy stuffing his face. Harry sometimes wondered if those things that Ron chose to ignore reached him at all.

Even if Ron didn't listen to reason, he had to acknowledge the reality, and reality, not even full month into the term, was that Snape stopped targeting only Harry. He came to the conclusion that if he can't be biased towards one student, he can always get him if he treated every other student in the school the same way. Obviously, he couldn't openly insult everyone, so now, everyone in the school had to suffer extremely difficult level of potions. Most of all, Slytherin's suffered the treatment, their protective Head of House gone in one second, just to be replaced by the spiteful tyrant that the whole school had to live with all along. But more concerning Harry, he had to suffer Ron's never-ending whine's.

"You have to be kidding me. It's not an essay, it's like we have to write a whole book about this potion. If only Snape..."

"Professor Snape," corrected Harry, not even looking up from his notes.

Only when he noticed that Ron's monologue had mysteriously stopped did he look up, just to notice that everyone else was staring at him. "What?" he asked, confused.

"You just told me to call Snape Professor," Ron repeated, dumbfounded.

"Yes. I know. I was here when it happened," responded Harry.

"But you annoyed him so much," added Neville.

"So?" asked Harry, still not understanding what was their problem.

"I think that what they're trying to ask is, why after all the disrespect you have shown, you still call him Professor," Hermione summed up, with even Luna nodding her head, showing that she too would like to know that.

"If you would achieve something great, let's say win some kind of international tournament, would you appreciate it if people refereed to you as a champion, winner, best, or any other honorary title that comes with your achievement?" Harry started, setting his notes aside for a while, while others nodded that it would be nice.

"But even if there is a lot of fields you can compete in, not everyone can be first. Still, everyone have their own triumphs throughout their life. That's where titles come in. You don't wake up one day and become a professor. While you can teach what you know to others, to be a professor you need to know more than basic school material. It takes years of additional studying, hard work, sometimes even research and having your own discoveries. Professor is more than master in his given field. But it isn't a single case scenario. Let's say that everyone can cook, at least a little, but you don't call random person standing in the kitchen a chef. Like with professor, chef is master when it comes to cooking. He knows what taste good, what fit together well, how to prepare food as to not spoil the ingredients. Another example. We call specialised type of trained people officers of the law. They aren't simply another type of neighbourhood watch. Or we call lawyers counsellors. I think nearly every occupation have a title attached to it, or should have. It all comes down to respect. Having set of skills that not many other people can say they possess is certainly something you can take pride in, and people having those skills should be respected for their achievements." Harry stopped to take a deep breath, and let it sink in.

"So, even if Professor Snape is a greasy git who can't pass his knowledge on, he still deserves his title for the work he did to achieve this level of knowledge, however small it might be," Harry said, and after a while of thought, he added. "Besides, calling him Professor is certainly better than the alternative."

Everyone looked puzzled, so he answered their unasked question.

"You know, as his students or apprentices in older days, we would have to call him Master Snape."

There was a large shudder passing through everyone present at that statement.

"Okay, fine, cute and all." Ron started again, showing one more time his inability of listening to reason. "But still, it's too much work. Can't we take a break or something?"

Now he was the centre of attention, as everyone stared at him like he questioned existence of the earth.

"It's a study group, not a classroom. No one tied you to your chair. If you have something better to do, you can go any time you want," Hermione answered for the rest of the group.

Ron instantly perked up at the chance of getting away from school-work, and immediately grabbed his things, rushing to the door. Only when he was at the end of the lane did he stop and look back at everyone still scribbling down their notes.

"Aren't you guys coming?"

"No, thanks. If we won't finish this now, we won't have any other occasion to gather everyone in one place," Hermione said over collective, obvious and very loud for such a small group, "No".

Ron's ears immediately reddened. In his mind's eye he saw them, sitting there, disregarding him as something insignificant, nearly saying out aloud "We don't need you, so get going...". As soon as he finished that thought, he stormed off. Not that others paid any mind to his little temper tantrum.

That vision kept repeating itself in his mind, but when he slammed the library door behind him, it was like someone snapped their fingers right in front of his face, and he regained enough consciousness to notice other side of things. They didn't need him. It wasn't that they disregarded him. It was just while they were working, he just sat there waiting for finished set of notes. Others had their jobs. Even Luna fitted into their working habit's without a pinch.

While Neville's questions tied new theories with what they already knew, Luna with her imagination would constantly ask if particular spell could be used to do something else, proposing how it could be changed or upgraded. She skilfully guessed what could be next step if that spell would have to evolve, even when it came to material a whole year ahead of her. Their teacher certainly appreciated that approach. Even her wacky comparisons helped, keeping everyone entertained.

Hermione, Neville, Harry, even Loony Luna. Every single one of them had their purpose in their group. But him? Ron Weasley? What have he been doing all this time? It indeed was true. They simply didn't need him.

While Ron was contemplating things right outside library doors, Neville had a question of his own.

"Harry? Why do you spend so much time in the library? You know, for your additional reading. Like Ron said, we already have lots of work."

"Look around Neville, and tell me what do you see."

Neville took one glance across the library and said the most obvious thing.

"Books?"

"And what's in the books?" Neville just shrugged. "Knowledge," Harry supplied with a smile.

"But we learn a lot in class."

"Yes we do. But studying from books and studying in class is only different because of the teacher. Even then, teacher have limited amount of time to answer questions and doubts. But if you understand particular subject exceptionally well, why should you wait for others? Why not learn it yourself? If you learn it faster, you have more time for subjects you don't do so well, or even can help the teacher with explanations during the class. And of course, above any other practical reason, there is that joy in knowing something

new about topic you take pleasure from." Harry answered, returning to his notes.

Neville took one more look around the library, and couldn't find any reasons not to stay with others for some additional reading. And so, he slumped down in his seat and picked up *Hogwarts; A History*, in case Professor Binns decided to keep the routine the same, and not say anything interesting in class.

AN. If you want to complain that I stopped describing animagi somewhere in the middle of the sentence, well, I ask you to be a little patient. I have more on the subject, just don't know where would be right place to put it. So, sit back, and wait just a little bit longer. It will come up... eventually...

Compare the length of my chapters to the ones in Harry Potter series, and make your own conclusion... Just make it right.

AN. Sorry for not much of a chapter, but I have a lazy streak, and even EnjoyEveryMoment can't do anything with this one.

A couple of days after such events, Harry and his friends were enjoying relatively sunny weekend, sitting on the castle grounds and discussing... well, everything. But even if world seemed to be suspended in a standstill, with sun fighting against dark stormy clouds from which no rain came down, and grassy fields not being disturbed by even slightest breeze, Harry just couldn't stop being himself.

"What's bugging you this time?" asked Hermione, noticing the state her friend was in. She always knew when somebody was upset; that just came with the job prescription of being Hermione. That, and preferring the library to a house party and bossing people around, older than her or not.

"It's... you know, even if Ron spent some time with us, it was too easy for him to spot Rose joining our group. If he could do it, anybody else can, given they pay attention... Heck, they could even stumble on it by chance. I don't really care people seeing me with her, but the state Slytherin House is in right now, with everyone knowing she's even somewhat close with me, it wouldn't be so easy for her to... hide." Harry stopped, because certain thought occurred to him.

"Luna, sweetness..." He turned to his other friend, who was again wearing her strange sunglasses and danish-looking hat, even though there was enough sunshine that you could barely call it "shaded" rather than "sunny" day. He also noticed Neville, dozing off on the other side of Luna.

"Yes, honey?" she asked, fishing a jar with aforementioned substance from a picnic basket sitting nearby.

"No, I'd rather go for jam," Harry answered, and shortly after the three of them begun to prepare their rolls.

"But what I was trying to ask is," he continued between bites, "what happened to our smallest friend?"

Luna smiled at him, and after cleaning her mouth with a napkin, she stuck two fingers in her mouth and gave a strange, melodic kind of whistle.

"What was that?" Harry asked after she stopped.

"Oh, just wait for it," Luna said offhandedly, continuing her roll.

Harry sat there, staring, waiting, and waiting, and waiting... and in the exact moment he lost his patience that something is going to happen, he got whacked in the head with something strange.

As it was, due to school work or necessity to sleep, Luna haven't always had the time to play with her plushy friend. The toy on the other hand, couldn't help but to feel a little adventurous... all the time. So it made journeys around the castle, picking quest so dangerous as to, for example, climb on that high, high windowsill without falling. Of course windowsill was barely waist high, but due to the scale the toy was made in, it was quite a challenge.

That state of affairs, Luna and her friend not being together at all times, required a way for them to find each other. Thus the whistling call. Of course, for the toy, it was only another game, find it's owner as fast as it could. This time, while it barrelled through the grassy field all the way from the castle, it had that grand idea to do a surprise attack on one of it's masters companions. Of course, the case of being only a plush toy surfaced again, and instead of toppling Harry to the ground and ending victoriously on top of him, it stopped on his cheek, looking like a trapeze artist who ended on a pole.

Harry picked the toy, which was wagging it's short tail like it executed it's plan spot-on, and couldn't help but notice a new addition.

"What's with the cape?" he asked while pointing at the fluffy blanket strapped to the toy's shoulders.

"Well, she sneezed all the time, so I thought she might be cold. She seems to like it, if the poses she make in front of the mirror are anything important," Luna responded from her spot, where she was,

at the very moment, suntanning, even though import of sunbeams haven't increased over the last 5 minutes.

Harry stared at the toy again, thinking about the cape. When he enchanted the toy, he didn't thought about adding additional things to it, and haven't had slightest idea how to incorporate new thing to enchantments that were already in place. So why the toy itself could do it on it's own, even enabling the blanket to vanish from sight? Harry thought about it a while, and came to the conclusion that it had something to do with the enchantments them self. The toy protected itself from everyone who wanted to do it harm... But then again, Harry hadn't exactly specified what kind of harm it could be. If the toy thought that someone stealing it's things was harmful, surely it needed to protect them. And what would be better way to make sure they are safe than taking them with you?

"Luna, could I borrow your friend for a little while?" Harry asked after a while of thought.

"If she says yes, then you can. She has enough of free time as it is, she'll bound to be looking for some adventure sooner or later."

Harry stared the toy in the eyes, even though it still was wiggling in his hands.

"You want to play a game?"

The toy elephant stopped moving and regarded him with head tilted to the side.

Harry smiled and told how he was in need of a brave man... elephant... toy... That he needed someone brave to sneak into the most dangerous place in the castle without being spotted, and deliver some things.

The toy blew it's trunk and started wiggling again, which was enough of a yes to Harry.

After some more improvements in toy's attire, a valiant hero was born. Seizie the Brave, best Postman-elephant in the world, boldly going where no toy went before.

Rose surely will be surprised to see something like that sneaking through Slytherin Common Room.

AN. Seriously, I can't concentrate on writing right now... So, as not to torment you all with scraps of what-could-be-chapters I think I'm going to give myself a writing free Christmas. If you want another real chapter, it's easy. All you have to do is to cancel Christmas...

I wish I could be J. K. Rowling right now, because I could go straight to writing this chapter, rather than bother with disclaimers.

AN. Sorry it took so long. EnjoyEveryMoment had the difficult task of putting me to work again after the New Years Eve...

The weekend ended, and the standstill that the world seemed to be in changed into a mad rush, while days were just passing by. But even when the world turned into one big blur, there were some changes that you just couldn't omit.

After that first Divination lesson, the tradition of Professor Trelawney predicting one of the students death was broken, because now she was more concerned about her own life. Her own knowledge of fatal signs and omens could be enough to make her worried, but we can't forget that Harry was there to lend a hand.

While Professor Snape was a spiteful man who couldn't talk to you for five minutes without pointing out everything he thought was a flaw, he still knew his art and was remarkable potion brewer, thus deserved at least a little respect. Professor Trelawney on the other hand, while seemed to know all the omens and signs by heart, had obviously no idea how they were tied together, or what was relation between them and the conditions they have revealed themselves.

Given that, all Harry had to do was to sit there, and in the right moment find interesting something like crack in the glass of the window, an uneven rock in the floor, or even a particular length of blank wall, and Professor Trelawney would do the rest, seeing death, destruction, disaster, and everything else she was predicting for students, threatening her from every corner of her own tower.

For the rest of the class, it looked like she was jumping as far as she could from the place that Harry was currently looking at, and remembering the very first class, they just couldn't stop thinking what he knew, and they were missing.

Another such change was with Care of Magical Creatures, and to everyone's relief, this was to ensure students' safety.

After that first class with Hippogriff, on his next visit, Harry spent some time talking with Hagrid about his class. Being the one to interact with Buckbeak, he certainly couldn't complain about the

lesson, even given that initial fear. He also knew that Hagrid couldn't be persuaded about "those misunderstood creatures" that people called dangerous. Instead, he concentrated on pointing that Hagrid already knew how to tame them, and it would be better to let students slowly get used to things with sharp teeth and claws. Having recent picture of Draco nearly disrespecting a Hippogriff, it wasn't long before Hagrid could see his point.

From that point on, lessons were proceeding in similar way as Hagrid was taught, when he was still training to be a Gamekeeper. All of the class would stay behind the fence, taking notes, and Hagrid would call them one by one to come inside and present some kind of animal-handling technique, while he gave lecture to the entire class from nearby, from where, if something went wrong, he could easily distract or tackle the animal, giving the student time to get to safety. So, even if in class they sometimes encountered animals more dangerous than they would like to, it was entirely different with mountain of muscles guarding you, and knowing working techniques how to handle them yourself, certainly eased everyone's mind. And even if it wasn't deep in the Forbidden Forest, Hagrid felt somewhat sentimental about that one-on-one, student-teacher interaction.

Even if Care of Magical Creatures was a little too exciting for some, they quickly forgot about it after coming to Defence Against the Dark Arts class. After the story of Harry's class Boggart lesson travelled around the school, everyone couldn't wait for their next opportunity to watch Professor Lupin's laid-back-style of teaching. Of course, lesson's haven't suddenly changed into one non-stop party, but still, students had so much fun just going along Professor's instructions, that they haven't even noticed how easily they could remember the essential information regarding the lessons topic.

There were some, mainly Draco with his gang, who still found something to complain about, but Harry related that to the fact that it became obvious that what earlier was called "elite" of the school, now wasn't looking so good in class. Harry also couldn't help but notice that sometimes Professor Lupin would watch him, maybe just a little too intently for it to be just teacher watching his pupils progress...

When it came to changes that you just couldn't omit, the first place this year would have to take Potions classroom. Seemingly, nothing

have changed. Students still took ingredients from the store room, made their potions by following the notes from the blackboard, gave samples of their product at the end of the lesson, and received horrible scores for their brews. By that description alone, you could say that nothing have changed. But again, that description haven't included the Potions Master, who this year seemed to be... distracted. First time anyone noticed that, was when there was no reaction from him when the story of Boggart-Snape teaching ballet circulated around the school. From that point, people noticed major change.

Before, he would give them instructions, then spent all the lesson making everyone feel miserable. Now, he would give them instructions and without a spoken word make it clear that he wanted to be left alone. Seeing his maniacal expression while he sat behind his desk, staring at a blank piece of wall and muttered to himself, no one objected to that, and soon, Potions became much more student friendly class.

Soon everyone noticed that without Snape hanging over their heads, watching their every move and insulting everything they've done, they could concentrate better. And since he wasn't paying attention to them, they could freely talk and exchange pointers among each other. That, and the fact that Slytherins couldn't do whatever they wanted without their Head of House protection, eliminated accidents during class practically to zero, and those that happened, were no more than a cloud of smoke. On one occasion, someone pointed out that since Potions became "mandatory study group" they understood more from it.

Slytherins on the other hand, couldn't understand the change of heart, or the bad scores they now received. As it was, while earlier Snape gave them higher scores, now he didn't pay attention to anything, and just filled minimal passing grade from top to bottom, giving a plus every couple of spaces, all the time muttering what would be a good way to torture a werewolf...

Given the amount of classes Harry had to attend, homework he had to do, study group he and his friends held regularly, and Quidditch training which Wood made so much murderous than before, just to help them remember that it was his last year, Harry sometimes found himself not minding small things, like...

"Where would you like to go in Hogsmeade?" Hermione asked one evening, while they were resting in the common room after one particularly hard day.

"Hmm?" Harry responded intelligently, being shaken half awake. He centred his glasses, and attempted to flatten his hair.

"Hogsmeade. Where would you like to go?" Hermione asked again, her words mumbled from the pen in her mouth as she rearranged her papers.

"When is it?" Harry asked, still not fully awake, looking around for a clock to make sure what time it is, completely forgetting the one on his wrist.

"It's on Halloween. Everyone in the school is talking about it. Haven't you noticed?" she asked, only now lifting her gaze to watch him, and laughed lightly at the state he was in, while he tried to shake his head. "So, where would you like to go?"

"Must we go?" he asked while rubbing his eyes. Harry sighed, looking on as Hermione's gaze narrowed at him.

"Has anyone ever told you that it's rude to answer a question with a question?" Hermione chastised him, scowling.

"You just did it yourself," Harry pointed out, making her huff in exasperation. She blew a strand of hair away from her eyes, and tilted her head at him. "Besides, a question can be an answer too." This gave him her full attention again. "Because it isn't important to answer every question, you just need to answer the right one, for all the others to be obvious, or at least not important."

"So, what is the right question in this case?"

"Well, I asked if we must go to Hogsmeade, so you should ask..." Harry stopped, staring at her intently.

"Why don't you want to go?" Hermione supplied.

"Yep, that should be the right one," Harry said after a while of thought, rubbing last bits of sleep out of his eyes. Hermione just shook her head. "So, you hear all those good things about

Hogsmeade. That it's fully magical village, have those amazing things to see, so much history, and all that... But while you think about it, with Hogwarts so close, so many stores in the village, doesn't it seem like a shopping district?"

"Well, you could say that," Hermione said with a nod, putting down her book and focusing on her friend.

"Okay, so there are some things you can do there. But think why you shouldn't go."

"I can see that you have it all planned out, so I'm not going to entertain you. Stop stalling and just speak your mind." she said, annoyance clear in her voice, which made Harry smile.

"Okay, okay... Remember that this is first trip this year, and now try to imagine it. While some from the older year students may stay as well, everyone from our year will probably go. With older students, let's say that two to three times that many people will go. In shops you will have to wait in long lines, you won't see much of town because of the people in the streets, and if it will be cold or even raining, any café or bar will be crowded... As I said before. Hogsmeade seems like a shopping district, so imagine a mall on a busy weekend."

Hermione thought about it, and could agree that it wasn't the same image that she had before.

"Great, now you ruined it for me. Now you have to fix it. When will be good time to go to Hogsmeade?"

"Around Christmas."

"Why Christmas?"

"Because if you go an hour or so later than everyone else, they should get cold and hide in a bar. Those who will see that there are no places left, will probably come back sooner. When we'll arrive it should be less crowded, with houses decorated for Christmas, snow laying everywhere... And when we will get cold, people who were in the bar should be gone too..."

Now that was a picture Hermione could enjoy. Having a town taken straight from a Christmas card all for themselves.

"I can work with that. But what will we do when everyone leaves?"

"I was thinking about Luna, since she can't go anyway, and her small, fluffy friend, and..." Harry left it hanging. Hermione's brow furrowed for a while, then she smiled.

Rose was sitting in Slytherin common room, observing her surroundings. She was doing it a lot lately. All those things she saw earlier, people striding around acting superior, those jabs to score a point at a non-existent board and be placed higher in the hierarchy no one spoke about, even those gentle signs indicating someone was just pretending... maybe an alliance of smaller players to topple a bigger fish and split the influence. All was there, but since that little chat she had with Harry, everything changed from threatening, to interesting.

To use a comparison, people say that everyone is just a little cogwheel in a bigger machine. If it was true, then Slytherin common room was like a giant clock, where every part tried to be more important, ultimate goal being the face of the clock, gaining all the praise while everyone worked for you. Of course, as competitive Slytherins were, in this particular clock, every part was working its own way. Earlier she was just a small cog, left alone to be bullied by higher players, to be put in her place and do her work for them. Now she felt more like a grain of sand, just watching where to put itself to screw everyone big time, while she fell safely on the other side of machinery once it fell apart. To do that, she had to know where to be, and when to get out of there to stay out of the harm's way.

Rose was sitting there, contemplating things, when she noticed certain thing. By now it she was somehow familiar with it, but it was quite a surprise to see a elephant-looking toy wearing a uniform with crests of other houses, sneaking through the common room... Well, if you could call what it was doing "sneaking". Walking slowly, with back pressed to a wall, while in full view, wasn't the stealthiest action Rose ever seen. Well, until she saw that it scrambled on top of the couch only to walk on the narrow headrest, while people still were sitting there.

But, surprisingly, no one seemed to notice. For a while, she thought that she might be imagining it, what with an enchanted castle. But then the toy finally got to her, and took a letter from a bag you would most likely see on a postman.

The letter was from Harry, explaining that the toy, Seizie he called it, would be best way to communicate, and that she shouldn't pay attention to it's weird antics. The toy was spelled to be invisible to anyone who meant it harm, and since it was carrying "super secret plans for destroying the Slytherin dominion in Hogwarst... *insert evil laughter here*"... Rose just shook her head at the memory of that letter, and reminded herself that it wasn't only the toy's crazy antics she shouldn't be paying mind to.

The toy finished it's crazy dance across the room, delivered it's usual letter, and surprisingly, a small gift box as well. Rose read the note on the box which said:

"Read the letter first... Damn, too late," Rose just had to roll her eyes. "Be prepared to get more of these. Inside the envelope are instructions what you should do with them when the coyote will howl under the tree which at noon cast a shadow of a squirrel... or when I write you it's time. Do not fail me... *insert evil laughter here*"

Rose snorted at the note, then chuckled at the instructions, and couldn't wait until it would start.

It was Halloween, first Hogsmeade weekend just finished, and Draco Malfoy wasn't pleased. He just came back from the village, where he had to wait in mile-long lines in every shop, frozen all over because there was no free space at the Three Broomsticks, and got drenched when it started to pour a freezing rain when he was returning to school. Unbeknownst to him, it wasn't the end of his bad luck.

He was heading to his dorm to get changed to something dry and warm, so he could at least enjoy the Halloween feast. He was at the door to the common room, gave the password, and was suddenly blinded by a radiant light. He stood there, blinded, not understanding what was going on, when suddenly interior of the common room became clearer, as the white hue disappeared from the front of his eyes.

The common room looked nothing like it used to, the change from dark and unlit to white and bright being responsible for the initial shock. The dark look vanished, being replaced by white, soft yellow, and even pinkish tones. Dark green leather sofas turned to red seats which were forming booths against the walls, and in the middle, there were tables. While slowly walking into the room, he noticed other students who came from Hogsmeade earlier, looking around the room with as much bewilderment as he was feeling. Then he noticed the most prominent change. Right in front of the fireplaces, there stood a long counter, with mannequins dressed as a cashier, and further back, right in front of the fire, two more dressed as cooks.

Of course, Draco couldn't know that, since he never have seen a muggle cook, or was in a muggle shop to recognise a cashier, but he probably got an idea that the Slytherin common room, at the moment was exact replica of a muggle diner. If not, sign above the counter saying "Eel diner" was a big clue.

"Eel?" Draco said to himself, never before encountering the word.

"Yes, sir. Best eel meals in Hogwarts. Our display specimens are on your right. Would you like to order now?" said a little plastic man with an oversized head, standing right by the door.

Draco turned to the right as told, and after seeing what swam in a fish-tank standing by the wall... "EEW!"

"Stew for you, sir. Would you like to order something else?" said the little plastic man with an oversized head.

"Of course not!" Draco snarled.

"Loaf of coarse snot. I'll add that to your order. Something to drink?"

"Screw you!" Draco screamed in exasperation. His eyes were starting to bulge, and he seriously considered reaching for the wand in his pocket.

"Two screwdrivers coming up. To receive your alcoholic beverages, you are required to show your ID at the counter. Thank you, and have a nice day."

While Draco pulled his hair out, Rose grinned more, her smile getting bigger with every new "customer".

AN. Yeah, I know that Eel isn't a type of snake, but I just couldn't think of anything else. Also, another chapter should be out shortly.

I once thought that being a celebrity was too much bother for me to do it, but I think I see at least one merit in being an author like J. K. Rowling... That is, leading a Disclaimer-free life.

AN. This chapter should have been out yesterday, but EnjoyEveryMoment and I were fighting with our profiles not working as well as they should. Anyone else have problem with theirs?

During the Halloween feast that evening, many noticed that practically no one at Slytherin table ate any food. They would just sit there, shifting their gaze between the dishes and shuddering from time to time. After Professor McGonagall nudged him out of his thoughts, which were obvious to anyone paying attention, given his repeated tries to make his meal integrated with the plate and him staring daggers at the current DADA teacher, Professor Snape grumpily went to investigate. After no more than one sentence from his students he gave an irritation-filled-grunt, and stormed out of the Great Hall, leaving everyone ever more puzzled about what might have happened.

An hour or so after the feast was done though, entire school had another mystery to solve. Sirius Black was seen in the castle. Everyone was directed back to the Great Hall for the night, something Slytherins seemed to be immensely grateful for. But even with that large of a forum, with so many people raising possibilities, no one had any idea how could he have done that. Harry, on the other hand, thought about entirely different question. The one he knew to be the right one. Not how, but why...

"There's no point hiding it from you any longer, Potter. I know this will come as a shock to you, but Sirius Black—"

"-Is said to be after me," Harry finished for his Head of House.

Professor McGonagall seemed very taken aback. By now Harry knew that she called him to explain the situation and why all those teachers who were now following him everywhere were needed for his own protection. But now, when she heard that he knew about it all along, she just stared at him.

"May I know from where you know that?" the Transfiguration Mistress asked after a while for thought, processing the chaos in the

school, and why it had grown to a complete halt when she looked at the raven-haired boy, who seemed perfectly at ease.

"There are interesting newspapers in the archives of Daily Prophet, and receiving them is even included into your subscription," Harry stated, at which his Head of House sighted, hanging her head. "But you misunderstood me Professor," that gave him her full attention again, "Sirius Black is said to be after me, that's what I said. But I meant that everyone assume he is after me."

"Well, of course he is after you. After what—what... you probably know what had happened. Why would you think he is here for anything else than..." Professor McGonagall stopped, uncomfortable with this train of thought.

'Yes, give it to her, Sherlock,' Magie cheered, appearing dressed in her Watson costume. Harry just smiled slightly, turning back to his Head of House.

"I think it strange that he would be here, and tried to attack exactly during Halloween feast," Harry begun.

"He is on the run. I can hardly imagine that he keeps track of the day..." Professor McGonagall tried to dismiss, only to be interrupted by Harry.

"He wouldn't have to," he said, and Transfiguration teacher frowned at him, "I know he was a student here, but even if he wasn't, on the Halloween day, the air is filled with smell of pumpkin pies, and the halls are looking so nice because of the..."

"Decorations," McGonagal said with wide eyes, and Harry just nodded.

"He should know that it's Halloween, that there will be a feast, that students would travel in groups to and from the Great Hall. Why would he try to attack a group of students, some of them in their seventh year..."

"I understand your argument, but you can't expect that a madman..."

"Who is the only person to escape from Azkaban, travel across country to Hogwarts, successfully avoiding the search parties for

couple of months now, have any survival instincts?" Harry asked, his Head of House frowning harder with his every word.

"But...but, that..." Minerva McGonagall found herself at a lack of words, and after she shook her head, she looked straight at Harry again. "What are you saying exactly, Potter?"

"I'm not saying anything. I was just thinking. If he knew that it was Halloween, that everyone will be at the feast..."

"What could he want in an empty dormitory?" McGonagall finished for him.

"Yes, Professor. That would be something I would want to know."

Even if Professor McGonagall agreed that he had a valid point of view, she still wouldn't relent in teachers accompanying him everywhere. Still, Quidditch practice under guard of Madam Hooch was far better than no practice at all, as was the initial idea. And even if, officially, she couldn't help the team in their training, that haven't stopped her from dropping pointers here and there. "Among fellow sportsmen," she would say, before making an off-hand comment about some flying technique or another.

Harry enjoyed his Quidditch practices, even when Wood would drone for hours about tactics, nearly lulling them to sleep, just to mangle them half to death with the practical part of his theories. He enjoyed it so much, not because he came close to loosing it, but because in days that followed, flying on his broom was the only time that he was absolutely free. No one really chained him "for his own protection", but that feeling of eyes following him everywhere he went, preventing him from doing some things he enjoyed, like helping Rose with her "assignment", or even visiting a certain old snake residing deep under the school, which he haven't done in a long while.

He couldn't even use his new found knowledge of schools hidden passageways without anyone noticing, which was the main reason he was late for his DADA class. But entering the room he found Professor Snape standing in front of the blackboard, instead of the teacher whose lessons he enjoyed so much.

"Ah, Potter. So nice of you to join us," Snape snarled, returning from his coma-like state to his, unfortunate, former self. "Ten points from Gryffindor for being late. Now sit down."

Harry didn't ask any questions, just raced quickly to his seat. He felt like something other than a normal lesson was going on, and he would see what soon enough.

Snape continued his tirade about Lupin's failings as a teacher, and it was clear that he was getting more and more irate with every person who was interrupting him to protect their DADA Professor. It was like they were spoiling it for him, that he had some agenda aside from lesson plan, that he wanted to talk about...

"Werewolves," Snape said with a twisted smile, stating at last what they would be learning today.

Entire class erupted in another round of complains about the subjects they haven't learnt yet, but Harry sat there, staring at Snape, finally understanding what he was trying to accomplish.

"Which of you can tell me how we distinguish between the werewolf and the true wolf?" said Snape.

Everyone sat in motionless silence; everyone except Hermione, whose hand, as it so often did, shot straight into the air.

Harry caught her attention, and slightly shook his head. She frowned at him, but still lowered her hand. The Potions Master seemed not to notice that, or chose to ignore it.

"Anyone?" Snape said. "Are you telling me that Professor Lupin hasn't even taught you the basic distinction between them?"

Seeing the interaction between Harry and Hermione, the rest of the class kept quiet.

"Well, well, well, I never thought I'd meet a third-year class who wouldn't even recognize a werewolf when they saw one—"

That was enough for Harry to confirm his assumption, and he couldn't help but to interfere with the tirade.

"I may not know how to spot a werewolf, but I certainly can do that with a person who is desperately trying to talk about things that are better left unsaid. Sir," Harry said, staring straight into those black cold eyes of the Potions Master.

Snape seemed to be thrown off balance by that, since he hadn't given into his first impulse, which would be to snap back at anyone who would interrupt him. Harry could see that he wasn't expecting to be found out so easily, that he thought his "stealthy" way of undermining Lupin would be so effective. That initial moment passed, and he again put his best sneer in place.

"Read that chapter. I expect no less than two rolls parchment describing every detail. Get to work," he snarled, and after that, went to sit behind the desk, returning to his "leave me alone or die" attitude, staring off into space.

Everyone exchanged glances, not understanding what exactly happened, but then went to reading. Still, seeing that meaningful look Hermione gave him, Harry knew that he would have to explain it, even if only to one person.

Late into the night, when everyone else went to sleep, there were still three people sitting in front of the fire in the Gryffindor common room. After making sure that there was no one else who could hear them, one of them said:

"Okay, we're alone. Now tell me what you know," Hermione demanded, her need to know making her sound a little unhinged. Her hair was a bit, if possible, fluffier than usual, and she blew a strand out of her eye to concentrate on Harry. She must have been worrying about the topic for most of the day.

Harry just smiled, and shifted his gaze from her to the window.

"There is beautiful moon out tonight," he commented, raising his eyebrows ever so slightly to see whether his friend would understand what he was implying.

Hermione scowled at him, but still, turned to the window. "It's full moon, isn't it?"

"Yeah. It's sad that Professor Lupin can't enjoy it."

"Professor Lupin is sick, not blind. Why couldn't he..." Hermione snapped at him in her irritation, but stopped, thinking about her own question. The moon, sick Professor, Snape's lesson, "things that are better left unsaid"...

Surprisingly, Neville got the conclusion faster, and there was very audible intake of breath from the spot that he was sitting in. Even though his back was turned, Harry could have sworn he even heard Neville's eyes widening and hands shaking.

"Yo-you do-don't mean..." he stuttered, a sure sign of him being nervous. After he said that, Hermione's jaw dropped to the floor. Harry just nodded to confirm that they, given their reactions, had the right conclusion.

"But you can't mean that Professor Dumbledore hired a... I mean, I've read through the chapter about werewolves again, and all those things they write about..."

"Hermione!" Harry said forcefully to prevent her from panicking because of all those things that she learnt on the subject. Neville on the other hand was getting greener by the minute. Seeing the state things were in, he chose the person who was more probable to explode first.

"Hermione, would you write anything good about leprosy?" she stopped, having a new problem helped to focus her attention. After a while, she shook her head. "Of course not. It's a disease, and in textbooks you would read about what kind of damage it does to the body. Since it's a Defence book, you have the same, all the bad sides of the werewolf. But books don't write about people, only about the disease. You don't read about sick being marginalised just because of the misfortune of being infected. Here it's worse, since they hunt werewolves down, like rabid animals." At that, Neville nodded, seemingly approving.

"It's good, too. My grandmother says they're dangerous," he commented, so Harry directed his next words to his male friend.

"All this time you spent with Professor Lupin, was he dangerous? Has he threatened you in any way? Was his proximity making you feel uncomfortable, or unsafe even?" Neville thought about it, and

hung his head, shaking it to say no. "I mean no disrespect to your grandmother, but make your own mind up about this one. Werewolves are dangerous only one day every month, and the rest of the time they're pretty much like anyone else. Given that, and seeing how our Professor is acting, I would have to say that being a werewolf doesn't automatically make you a bad person. On the other hand, being a bad person will make you into a ferocious beast once you turn into a werewolf,"

"And everyone thinks of every single werewolf badly, because bad things is all you can hear about them," Hermione added.

They sat there for a while more before going to sleep, with their own thoughts to deal with. Those thoughts were mainly of full moons, howling in the distance, and the question whether or not Dumbledore really knew what he was doing.

Harry didn't sleep much that night, especially with greater part of it spent on petting Crookshanks, who repeatedly tried to sneak up to the boys dorm room. The cat seemed to be very smart, if the way he sniffed, then licked Harry when he caught him the first time, had to do say anything. Harry thought that he probably remembered him from the train, and was counting on a good scratch. So for couple of hours, he sat in front of the fire that nearly died a few times, scratching the cat. Most of the time, however, he was thinking what could be the reason for it to be so obsessed with Scrabbers, a little mind-game to pass the time, while he was staring at the thunderstorm raging outside.

Finally noticing the time, he settled on the idea that Crookshanks saw Scrabbers as a challenge, closely protected, thus funnier to achieve, and went to get some breakfast. Entering the Great Hall, he noticed that the Slytherin team was a bit on the green side, and it had nothing to do with their uniforms.

"What's with them?" Harry asked pointing to the Slytherin table, after he found a seat by his own team mates.

"While we were training, they tried to reschedule, or cancel this game on some basis or other," Wood said. "As it is, nothing worked and they have to play," he finished, and a thunder clap accompanied his satisfied smile.

"That, or they ate something bad," Fred piped in. His smile was all too innocent for them not to be involved in whatever had happened to the Slytherins, or at least had some idea who was. That, or they really were innocent. On second thoughts, they'd probably done at least one other thing to make the words "detention" and "torture" slip into the minds of their prank targets.

"Yeah. We heard about a new restaurant opening nearby," commented George, fingering his spoon with an identical grin as his twin.

"Do you know about it, Harry?" they asked together.

"No, I don't think so," he stated innocently, finding his scrambled eggs immensely interesting. "Tell, me all about it."

For the duration of the meal, the entire team boosted their morale, at the expense of Slytherins' misfortune. It was good that they did, because once they were on the field, things weren't so bright any more. There was so much water pouring from the sky, that Harry couldn't believe that he was still able to breathe freely. Clouds that were hanging over the stadium were so thick, that even knowing that it was mid morning, it was hard not to think of it as late evening. And of course, thanks to the thunderstorm and ferocious wind, you could hardly hear anything from the person standing next to you, not even saying about anything couple of feet away. As it was, they had to play a game while being practically deaf, blind, and numb from the cold rain. Harry immediately knew that it would be up to him to end it as fast as he could.

Just before they went off, Hermione charmed his glasses to repel water, but after they begun on Madam Hooch's signal, he knew that even if he could see, flying in those conditions wouldn't be the easiest thing he had ever done. Still, thanks to Woods training, they were doing much better than Slytherins, who, even with their superior brooms, couldn't even predict in which direction they would go.

Harry lost track of time, but finally he spotted that elusive glint of gold climbing higher and higher into the sky, and immediately gave chase. Going after the Snitch, he quickly glanced back to see if Malfoy was after him, and in a moment of light that came with a thunder, he saw a big black dog sitting in the top row of seats. He

hesitated for a while, to make sure that he really saw the dog, but that was enough for the wind to throw him of course, and by the time he regained control over his broom, Malfoy caught up to him.

They sped up after the golden ball, Malfoy having his superior broom, but Harry making better use of his, given the training he went through. They were by the Snitch, both reaching for it, when at last Harry noticed a strange silence that descended on the stadium, and that coldness that couldn't even remotely be related to the rain... In the second he noticed that, time slowed down to a stop. He had enough time to register pain in his ribs, before he was falling...

'Wake up.'

It was completely dark, and Harry could feel he was falling, but gravity wasn't working right. It felt more like slowly descending deeper into water rather than falling through air.

'Wake up.'

He could hear a hum. Was it a hum? Maybe it was more of a whistle. There was a flash of light, but not the one like he remembered from the last time he was in this dream like state.

'Wake up!'

There was a silhouette in front of him. Someone was screaming. Who was screaming? What was that person screaming? Concentrate, Harry!

'WAKE UP!'

Harry opened his eyes, and indeed he was falling with the raindrops of the thunderstorm that was still raging, wind howling all around him, and thunders cutting through the air. One good look above, and he could see Malfoy on his broom, just above a score of Dementors who were hanging in the air. Once he took that all in, gravity returned with it's full force, and he plunged to the ground, with Dementors chasing after him.

The silhouette in front of him stayed the same though, and after concentrating on it, he could see it was Magie, who was seemingly standing in the air just in front of him.

'Finally, you're awake. How long would you like for me to stand here and call for you?' she asked, clearly annoyed. Seeing Harry staring at her blankly, still in his half-awake state, she huffed, and put a string in his hand. 'Here, pull this for me, OK?'

Harry shifted his gaze from her to the string in his hand, but done as he was told. It was fortunate for him to do it in this exact moment, because the enchantment that Magie had put on his uniform had enough time to change the cloth into something like a parachute, said construct slow his descend, before the rest of the speed from his fall and an additional gust of wind smacked him into the muddy field. For once in his life, Harry was glad about the mud on the field.

In the next second, the whole world filled with a bright, silver light, and when that receded, there were people all around him.

"Is he all right?","Is he hurt?","Take him to the locker room.","Make way!","Coming through!"

They lead him to their locker room, and soon after Madam Pomfrey came up with something to wake him up, gave him chocolate to fight the effect Dementors had on him, and proceeded to scan him for any additional injuries.

"How are you feeling?" she asked, while still casting spells on him, and mixing something that didn't look like he would ever want to put it in his mouth.

"Shaky, but all right," he answered, while trying to sit in more comfortable position. That's when his chest reminded him about itself. "On the other hand, you could do something about my ribs," he said through gritted teeth.

Immediately, the school's nurse went for that spot, and moments later announced, "Cracked ribs from blunt trauma, you should feel pain, but it's nothing one or two potions couldn't heal. Now, tell us what happened."

He related as best as he could, the chase, when he noticed the Dementors, and the moment when he thought he fell from his broom, remembering the pain. He skipped how, just said that he woke up

moments later to see that he had fallen through the group of Dementors, that he had enough mind to understand he had to somehow slow his fall. He stopped there, as everyone could see the effects of that.

The problem was, that the end of his story was heard only by Madam Pomfrey, as the rest of his team and supporters went outside at the description of the moment he fell from his broom. Carefully he stood up, and went to the exit to see what was happening.

He could see Slytherins were enjoying their win outside, not minding the rain any more, or the fact that practically everyone else left, given the effects Dementors had on people. Draco was boasting, showing everyone the Snitch he caught, which gave Slytherins enough points to trample the lead that Gryffindor chasers were able to produce.

Wood charged right up to Draco, picked him up by his shirt, and even through the rain Harry could hear his team mates shouts.

"YOU KNOCKED HIM OFF HIS BROOM YOU LITTLE-"

"WOOD!" Professor McGonagal interfered, making Wood not only let go of Malfoy, but throw him down into the mud.

A heated discussion preceeded, that, Harry only assumed, was about Wood's behaviour from McGonagall's end, and Wood's reasons for his anger, with both teams joining into the shouting match. But it all stopped, when the ball that fell into the mud with Draco, spread its wings, got itself from the ground, and zoomed through the air. Everyone stared as Snitch flew, not to Draco, but to Harry, who was still standing in the locker room entrance.

Harry frowned at the little ball hovering in front of him, even poked it with his finger to make it go away, and then stopped, because strangest sound reached his ears. Laughter. He looked up to see Wood, standing there, rain pouring all over him, but still, he was doubled with laughter like he heard the best joke ever. Harry grabbed the golden ball, and went to the group to ask what was so funny.

"Don't-don't you know?" Wood tried to explain, still in the middle of a laughing fit. "Snitches have flesh memories, to distinguish who caught it first in case there is any uncertainty." He finally straightened out, grinning broadly. "You have the Snitch in your hand. You must have caught it, just to drop it when you fell. And that means..."

"We won," Fred finished, slack-jawed. He looked like he had gone into a state of shock, and Harry was possibly considering calling Madame Pomfrey until he broke out into a wide smile, his eyes twinkling with humour.

"We won," George chorused.

"WE WON!" the entire team shouted together, and again there were people all over Harry, trading hugs and pats on the back. Girls probably kissed him at least three times each, and still, everyone had to be reminded to watch his ribs. Wood carried him on his shoulders all the way to the castle, with Fred and George speeding to the common room to prepare a fitting party.

But when they were passing by the Slytherin team, which was now looking even worse than before the game, Harry locked his eyes with Malfoys, and mouthed "You owe me" while pointing to the sky.

And Draco Malfoy hated himself in that moment. Not because of what he had done, but because deep inside, he felt that it was true. He owed a debt to Harry Potter for saving him from the Dementors. That was not a debt he felt good about, either.

AN. Just reminding that underlined text is taken straight from the book.

Now, 100k words in this story, and still counting. When I started, I thought I would be finishing somewhere around here, but I'm not even halfway through the third year... No matter, that only means there is so much more more fun in front of us... and... more sleepless nights for me, being overwhelmed with all those ideas wanting to make the stage... damn...

All of you can see that I don't write perfect English. That in it's own right have to disqualify me from being a professional author like J. K. Rowling.

AN. After a lazy Saturday, we got ourself to work, and as I'm writing this, EnjoyEveryMoment is reading through another chapter. Now, this is what I call a interactive writing...

The party in Gryffindor Tower turned out a little more chaotic than anyone might have expected, with Professor McGonagall having to come up at least twice to remind them about their behaviour. But still, a little of excessive happiness after an encounter with a Dementor should be expected, saying nothing about such a close loss to the Slytherins. Only when it was morning some remembered that no one thought about Harry's broom. When they found it smashed to bits and pieces under the Whooping Willow, they noticed that Harry himself wasn't exactly paying attention.

His closest friends could tell that he had a problem to solve, and that he couldn't be bothered until he had his answer. Harry himself didn't know where to start, because somewhere in his own mind, he had that strange idea that all of his problems - his Godfather being on the run, which led to teachers thinking he needed protection, which further led to Dementors and those strange visions he kept having - could be solved by something so simple, so obvious, that his mind on it's own disregarded it as not probable, and for the life of it, he couldn't think what it could be.

What brought him back from his stupor was a message from Rose, saying that teachers at last restored Slytherin common room to it's previous glory. He couldn't stop laughing for good fifteen minutes because of it. Of course, days of the most famous diner inside Hogwarts' walls were over, but what was so funny about it, was that it took teachers three weeks to solve the mystery of the prank. The mystery was: there was no mystery at all.

All this time, teachers tried to find a way to end the illusion or transfiguration that someone might have done on the interior of the Slytherin common room. Illusion or transfiguration, because they didn't know for sure what was done. All their efforts to find out the means by which the room might have been changed, failed, and casting counters one after the other proved no effect.

And it wouldn't even in a million years, because the only thing that had charms on it in the whole new interior, was the little plastic figure taking in the orders. The rest of it, was real. Walls, counter, mannequins, tables... Everything shrunk and sent to Rose in little gift-boxes, which were placed in various spots in the room, that unpacked them-self upon hearing proper command. Harry had no idea where Fred and George got their "supplies" from, but people there had to be seriously wondering where they could have misplaced a whole decoration's set, not saying anything about a gigantic bunny-balloon.

Of course, the teachers wouldn't know that if not for Professor Snape, who got so irritated about having to stare at the design for yet another day, that he kicked one of the walls, which promptly collapsed on top of him, revealing unchanged wall behind it. Then it was as simple as to shrink the decorations again, take them out, and rearrange the original furniture which was hidden behind the set-up. Surprisingly, all this time, no one noticed that common room shrunk 6feet in width, and when Rose asked about that, Harry simply replied "It's because of the bright colours".

But returning to the reality, meant dealing with entirely different set of problems, the biggest of which turned out to be Ron Weasley, who no matter what, couldn't be persuaded that there is simply no such thing as "control" when it comes to owning a cat, because he was still insisting that Hermione did brought the misfortune on Scabbers intentionally. No matter how much Harry, and surprisingly Neville too, tried to stand up for her, he wouldn't calm down, and almost everyone in the tower came to the decision that he was overreacting, when the third day of ranting about his poor rat being eaten by the cat, came to pass.

It was far easier to talk Hermione into not minding Ron, waiting until he lost his steam, than to negotiate with him. Surprisingly, it was far harder for Harry to stop minding Crookshanks, who became restless in the following days. The cat frequently ran around the Gryffindor common room, searching in every crack big enough to put his paw in. But wherever he went, if he passed anywhere near Harry, he did everything to catch his attention. In time, Harry had less and less excuses for such a behaviour, because Crookshanks didn't even look at any snacks presented to him, and whenever Harry tried to scratch him, he sprung off to go for another look around the tower. Certainly not a behaviour of a content cat who just ate a big fat rat.

On one evening, it went beyond whatever Harry could explain. Crookshanks was running rampant again, and as always, while passing by Harry, tapped his leg with his paw. Harry picked him up, looked straight at him, and somewhat irritated with their little game, asked out loud:

"What? What are you trying to tell me?"

Crookshanks became completely still, looking back at Harry. Then his ears moved, he started wiggling furiously, and after Harry set him down again, he ran up to the window and began scratching the glass. Harry went after him, confused what it'll be now, and looked out the window, just for his eyes to widen. Down below, sneaking across the grounds, was a big black dog, which by now for Harry was unmistakable. Harry had that sinking feeling that mystery regarding his Godfather was getting more and more bizarre with every new clue.

Hogsmeade trip was on the day before end of term, when most of the students would return to their homes for Christmas. But even so close to the break, when Harry and his friends were walking around a town that could be taken straight from Christmas postcard, a day couldn't pass without Sirius Black leaving his mark in Harry's life. Today, quite literally, as it took Harry only 5 minutes in Hogsmeade to spot dog tracks imprinted in the snow. Harry, even without being told, knew that there was only one dog that could have left those.

"What is it?" Hermione asked when he stopped dead in his tracks.

"I just remembered I have to do something." Harry replied, turning to her and smiling slightly.

"Will it take long?" she questioned.

"I think that it shouldn't take too long." Harry commented off handedly.

"Then we'll come with you." came an unexpected response.

Harry's first impulse was to make them stay, or lie that it was something he needed to do alone. Well, he wouldn't be lying. 'But if they understand about Lupin...' he thought.

'Sooner or later, they'll need to know,' Magie added helpfully, appearing as she always did beside him.

"Okay, let's go," Harry said after a while of thought, and he moved along the tracks that were most clear in the snow.

They took them off the main road, to the countryside around Hogsmeade. It seemed that they were passing by the homes of people managing the shops in the village, but even that quickly ended, as they neared the mountain. After taking the turn, they saw a stile at the end of the lane. Harry made to cross it, when:

"Harry, where are we going?" Neville asked, less sure of this trip than he was being in the middle of the village.

"Do you trust me?" Harry asked, one foot on the stile. "Both of you?"

Hermione and Neville glanced at each other, but in the end said "Yes," and "Yes, of course."

"I don't know," Harry said, getting over the stile.

"What?" both of them asked, but still following him.

"I don't know where we're going."

That answer prompted his companions to exchange glances again, this time a lot more worried than before. They followed the trail, which turned out to be leading up the mountain, until it vanished. Quick look around, they found a crevice in the rock, which lead them to an empty, dimly lit cave.

"Great, so what now?" Hermione asked, not appreciating this turn of events. Seeing as Harry just stood there, she sighted. "Tell me when you'll be ready to go back," she said, and found a big rock against one of the walls to sit on, with enough space for Neville to join her.

Harry meanwhile waited for Magie, who was playing one of her games.

'Eenie, meenie, miney, moe,' she said in sing-songy voice, while pointing random stones, 'You may stay, and you must...go,' she stopped, pointing rock which looked like any other.

Harry didn't even wait, he stepped closer to pick it up, but instead of coming out of the pile, it went further down. In the exact moment when that happened, the "bench" Hermione and Neville were sitting on turned upside down, and what was left after them, was a vanishing echo of their screams. Harry came closer to the now visible passage, only to notice a slide similar to the one leading to the Chamber of Secrets. He grinned, and quickly followed after his friends.

"What was that for?" Hermione, who looked a little worse for wear, shouted at him when he joined them at the bottom of the slide.

"Hey, I told you once already that I have no idea where we're going." Harry said with a shrug, quickly getting further down the corridor. Hermione huffed in exasperation, and Neville just shook his head with a grin, remembering that no matter what Harry did, it always ended more exciting than you would anticipate.

"Then why are we following this crazy path?" Hermione asked after she caught up to him.

"Because of the person that went here first," Harry answered, coming to a stop in front of set of doors. He turned around. "I'll ask again, because it's very important. Do you trust me?" he asked, looking both of them.

"We left Hogsmeade after we just entered it, went mountain climbing, then caving, and after all this you ask me if I trust you?" Hermione asked, getting more annoyed by the minute. Harry nodded with a smile. "Yeah, whatever. Can we move already?" she answered with a sigh. Neville just grinned more.

Harry nodded, before becoming serious. "Then don't panic," he said, before opening the doors in front of him. His companions stopped short at the change of mood, both thinking, why would they panic?

"You look like crap," they heard Harry say, and quickly followed through the doors. It turned out that the tunnel was hidden in a wardrobe, which stood in an old dusty house. They saw Harry

standing nearby, but more interesting for them was person standing on the end of the corridor. Because there was the man which most of the wizards dreaded meeting. Sirius Black. Still, they didn't panic. Their minds were wiped clean with complete state of shock, even taking panic with it.

Sirius seemed to be surprised himself, but got over it quickly, then checked himself over, and said: "Yeah, it seems so." He gave himself a short sniff and added. "But I think crap smells better," while waving his hand in front of his face.

That got a small chuckle out of Harry, and made thinking process to restart in his companions minds. Normal thing to do was to run at first glance at the man standing in front of them, dressed in rags, matted, filthy hair hanging from his head, at least partly covering his waxy skin, tightly stretched over his face. Yet, Harry was standing there, conversing like with an old lost friend. They remembered what he told them, and just stood there, watching as things played out.

"How did you find my little love nest?" Sirius said, admiring the dusty floor, wall's full of cracks and scratch marks, and windows which were boarded shut.

"You know, that good for nothing dog as you call him, leaves mighty large tracks wherever he goes," Harry said, giving him a pointed look, at which Sirius just nodded.

"So... are you going to take me in now, or what?" he asked, getting more serious.

"Well, since I brought my own search party... I'd rather know what's the treasure you've been searching for," Harry said with a smile, and his godfather relaxed again.

"I know it might sound crazy..." Sirius begun, just to be interrupted by a bushy haired girl who seemed to have recovered; and was not happy about it.

"Yes, because all of this isn't crazy," Hermione said out loud.

"Oh, it speaks!" Sirius chorused joyfully. Hermione just huffed, crossing her arms, while Neville grinned with Harry.

"You were saying," Harry prompted, noticing that his godfathers face darkened.

"Pettigrew," he spat, "That rat is hiding somewhere in the castle, and..."

Harry couldn't hear the rest, because it was tuned out by his own thoughts.

'The rat. The rat! Cat, Rat and Dog. Sirius somehow asked Crookshanks to get the Rat, since he is such a smart cat. But if Rat is the same as Sirius, Magie should...' Harry turned to Magie who to this point was following them soundlessly.

'Why would I want to touch a...' she begun with a disgusted face, only to stop with wide eyes. 'Erm, Harry... Not wanting to touch something, isn't the same as if I couldn't do it?' she asked, wincing.

Harry quickly whipped out the map that he still had on him, and after muttering the activation phrase, scanned it. Finding what he was looking for he turned back to Sirius who was still ranting.

"...and when I get that..." he went on, doing strangling motions with his hands.

"You rather go after that, or are you more interested in this Petter Pettigrew?" Harry asked, putting the map right in front of his face, and pointing to the clearly visible name.

After Harry showed him the map, or more exactly what was shown on it, Sirius had enough time to call for everybody to follow him, before he vanished in yet another tunnel. They sped after him, staying as closely as they could while running bent almost double, but they quickly lost sight of Sirius, running ahead in his dog form. They caught with him at the end of the tunnel. After he stuck his arm outside and fiddled with something, he said it was safe to get out. When they noticed the Whooping Willow, they weren't so sure about being safe. Sirius didn't mind, because he again sped off, this time in his human form, making them chase after him again.

"Hey! We were in the Shreaking Shack!" Harry exclaimed, finally understanding where the odd tunnel shown on the map led.

"It's supposed to be haunted. How many entrances does it have?" Hermione asked with a frown.

"Just the two," Sirius replied, not slowing the pace. "The one you entered by we dug by ourself. This is the original one, built for..."

"Professor Lupin!" Harry exclaimed again, having another revelation, scratch marks being a big hint.

"Lily would be proud." Sirius said with a broad grin, while looking over his shoulder.

"Guys... Why are we heading towards the Forbidden Forest?" asked Neville, paying mind to more immediate problems.

"Because as long as I don't have the proof, I'm still on the run." Sirius commented, setting his mind on the goal.

They travelled further into the forest, Sirius leading them through the undergrowth, making turns in exact moments as if he memorised the route, avoiding the thickest of it. Suddenly, he stopped. By now, everyone else lost track where they might be, but Sirius just stood there, looking around for a while, then said:

"Harry, check the map again."

He did, and surprisingly, they could be seen just on the edge of it, with Hagrid's hut being the closest building. But Peter Pettigrew could no longer be seen near Hagrid's hut, instead...

"We might have a problem," Harry said, stopping Sirius in his tracks. "It seems Hagrid might have found the rat, and since he thinks it's Scabbers, he's got him. It looks like he's doing a patrol around the grounds, and is heading this way."

"Scabbers," Sirius said with disgust. "Wormtail at least told you what kind of person he really was."

Harry stopped, took a double look at Sirius, and grinned. "So, that good for nothing dog of yours was named Padfoot, wasn't it? Then Professor Lupin was Moony."

"And your dad was Prongs." Sirius finished, with a similar grin.

"Guys!" Hermione hissed, "Problem? Hagrid? Ring any bells?", her voice a loud whisper, and they understood why when they heard the sound of steps that could belong only to Hagrid.

"Hide, we'll take care of it," Harry whispered to Sirius, and without waiting for a reply, went in the direction Hagrid was heading to, with his friends in his tracks.

"Who goes there?" a booming voice caught them by surprise as they got nearer.

"Hey! Lower that thing." Harry said, with his hands high, stepping out of the bushes right in front of Hagrid's crossbow.

"What're ya doing here? Ya know that ya shouldn't wander into the forest," the giant of a man said, lowering his weapon.

"We were looking for Scabbers," Harry instantly said, because truth be told, they were.

"I think you mean this little bugger, don't you?" Hagrid asked while fishing the rat from his pocket. "I found him nibbling the plants on my patch," he added while handing it to Harry.

Harry thought for a minute, then came to a decision, and begun before Hagrid begun asking why they were wandering around the forest alone, instead of asking anyone for help.

"Hagrid, could you set you crossbow down for a while? I'll need your help with something," Harry said, exchanging glances with his two companions.

"So, what are we doing?" Hagrid asked after he put his crossbow against a tree.

"You trust my judgement, right?"

"Well, sure. You're a smart kid, Harry," Hagrid answered, smiling, his voice echoing through the forest like a fog-horn.

"Then stand still until we finish explaining," Harry said, then took the rat by the tail, and hanging him in front of him. "Hermione, could you..."

"Petrificus Totalus." Hermione cast on the rat, and its body became rigid, but its eyes swiveled in circles. Meanwhile, Harry whistled a whistle which you expect someone to call a dog with, and placed the rat on the ground.

The bushes behind them started shaking, and Sirius came out of them, mimicking Harry's surrender gesture. Hagrid took one look at the ragged visitor and his face darkened.

"YOU!" he roared, ready to lunge at the man.

"HAGRID!" Harry shouted. Having so much experience from his uncle, he knew that it was best to stop the man before he built up steam.

Hagrid did stop, took in the scene, with three of them standing there calmly, Sirius standing still, with his hands raised, and a petrified rat laying on the ground. Confusion replaced his initial rage.

"Explain, quickly," he demanded in gruff voice, his brow still furrowed.

"Show him," Harry said, slowly getting his wand out and handing it to Sirius, maintaining eye contact with Hagrid as to make sure he stays calm.

Sirius took the wand, slowly made his way to the petrified rat, squatted down in front of it, and with a muttered incantation, touched it with his wand. Before their very eyes, the rat changed into a fully grown man. It was like watching a tree grow from a seed in high speed.

"Here's your rat," Sirius said, in much calmer voice, as he was watching the eyes on the petrified man dart around frantically. He stood up, handing the wand over, not to Harry, but to Hagrid.

Hagrid didn't take it though. He didn't even look at Sirius. He just watched Pettigrew laying there, and his face became darker by the second, even more than when he saw Sirius.

"Hagrid, we need to take him to the castle," Hermione said, her gentle voice bringing the giant back, since it was so unfitting in his current thoughts. "We need to hand him over."

Only now did Hagrid look at Sirius, and after staring at him for a while, he gave a short nod. He picked still petrified Pettigrew, and for a while, he looked like he was thinking about crushing the little man with his hands, but then went on in the direction he came from.

"Go with him and tell what happened," Harry said to his friends. "We'll be waiting here."

Hermione and Neville looked shortly between him and Hagrid who was getting further away, before running after the giant.

Harry and Sirius stood there, doing awkward small talk while they waited. Neither knew what they were really waiting for. Someone to come and tell them that Sirius could stop running? Maybe an auror to take him into custody until official hearing. Whatever they were thinking, they haven't anticipated the temperature to drop, or the feeling of dread to settle into their bones. The demons of Azkaban, who were still hunting Sirius, came to get him. At it wasn't some of them. It wasn't even couple of dozens, like during the game. From what it looked like, all of them came, because anywhere Harry looked, were only black shadows, and their ragged breaths was the only sound that could be heard.

In seconds, Sirius was on the ground, his tired mind not able to handle the strain, but with that many, Harry was soon to follow. He was on his knees when it happened, stronger and faster than before. Again he felt like he was falling, but it didn't felt exactly the same. It was like someone was lowering him, and that hum he heard all those times before was there too, clearer than ever. It couldn't have anything to do with Dementors. It was too clear, and too melodic... It was as if someone was humming to him.

Fighting his tiredness he opened his eyes, and there was silhouette right in front of him. He concentrated harder, and he could make a face.

'Magie.'

She was looking down at him, humming softly, like she used to do when he couldn't sleep, troubled by some thoughts.

'Stupid Magie. Why is she putting me to sleep in this situation?' he thought and smiled at the stupidity of such thing. The face above him smiled back.

But as he thought about it, he noticed another strange thing.

'Why does Magie look so old? She's younger than me. And when did she change her hair colour? And those eyes... they're like... mine.' he thought, and immediately, he remembered.

Mum...

'My mother used to sing to me, even my dad did it when she couldn't, but mum was always better at it. She used to sing more gently, and it would be this humming melody when I was falling asleep...'

It is strange how memory worked. That memory could have been as well the night his parents were killed... but right now he didn't bother with that. He remembered. He remembered his mother putting him to sleep, his father lifting him high in the air, even Sirius and Remus grinning down at him...

Those weren't whole memories, more like pictures flashing before his eyes, but it was enough for him to imagine his family and their friends. Happy days from the past...

And as those pictures were flashing faster and faster, he no longer could identify what they showed, and instead, there was only one spot of light, as if someone finished a slide show, but forgot to turn of the lamp.

'Don't go into the light.' went a funny thought through Harry's head, but he just couldn't stop himself from reaching for it with his hands. That light represented all those good things he just saw, he just had to have it.

He blinked...

He was lying on the ground with his arms outstretched, and he could see a faint light glowing from between his fingers. He sat up, and

looked at his hands, still holding onto something. He brought them closer, not wanting to let whatever he was holding to escape. But as he opened them to take a peak, he saw brilliantly white lily flower.

'Mum...' Harry thought again, and a single tear rolled from his eye, across his cheek, and onto the flower. And as they touched, the white petals started to fly away with a wind that Harry couldn't feel, and were just flowing gently around him, every single one of them emanating a soft glow.

For Harry, it looked like there was nothing else. Like there was only him, suspended inside a galaxy of stars. But it didn't bother him, as wherever he looked, he saw star-like flower petals, and each had different feel to it.

Closest ones were those from the past, but there were other as well, representing his friends, his accomplished, things he liked... He stood up as more and more appeared, some brighter than other, but one, the one right above him, was shining the brightest...

'Magie.' Harry thought, this time correctly. 'My own Northern star. Always there, whenever I needed her, or even sometimes it seems she's there "just because"...' he smiled, and turned to look for others. And wanting too see more and more, he begun to spin, laughing at how good it felt, watching the stars dance against black sky.

Of course, that wasn't sky that he was looking at, but maybe it was better that he didn't notice, because Dementors garbed in their black rags, that made so good of a background for this light show, stopped when the white lily appeared, and now were in full retreat, running as fast as they could from the happy memories spreading in the air.

Harry stopped. He was dizzy and he felt weak... exhausted even. Falling down near his godfather, he passed out with a content smile on his face.

AN. I'm tired sometimes. Harry looks like James, play Quidditch like James, everyone refer to him as a miniature-clone-of-James-Potter, AND he have a stag Patronus. Come on people, give some credit to Lily.

I'm tired of pointing out why I can't be J. K. Rowling. Why couldn't J. K. Rowling, at least once, write why she can't be me? *sigh...think* Erm...*scratch his head* It would be exactly the same thing, wouldn't it? *shrugs...goes back to work*

AN. And here it is. Nothing like chapters made on production line.

Harry stirred in his bed...

'Hmm, bed.' His unconscious mind had finally caught up, and with that came other things, like clean, warm sheets, and that distinctive smell hanging in the air, which could be only in a hospital.

'So, I'm in the hospital wing,' Harry summarised, and opened his eyes, just to close them because of the whiteness that was everywhere. He tried again, slower this time, and it was true that everything around him was white, and because of the sun, everything seemed to have a glow to it.

While he was looking around, his gaze came upon something a lot closer, because for the first time he noticed he wasn't alone in bed. It wasn't a problem though, because even without his glasses, he could recognise that face.

'Hi, Magie', 'Hi, Harry' they said together, two smiles breaking out between them.

'Rough night?' she asked with a yawn.

'You could say that,' Harry allowed, but after a quick glimpse into what transpired the previous night, 'Thank you,' he said.

'Hmm?' Magie asked with her eyes closed, looking like she was going back to sleep.

'You know, for making me remember, even when I didn't know what you were doing.' She opened one eye to look at him again. 'All those times you tucked me to sleep, or... Just all those times you took care of me, Dementors or not.'

'No big deal,' she said, closing her eyes again, settling back in, 'You know that I'm the way you want me to be.'

'Yeah, you're perfect.'

'Hmm,' she sighed contently.

Harry made to look for his glasses, to make sure of the time, or even what day it was, but Magie already begun to put it on his nose, before he even got the time to turn on his back. He grinned at her, but once he could see clearly again, that grin changed to look of confusion.

'Magie, you're...' he begun, only to be interrupted.

'Yes, I'm perfect, you said that already,' she said with a slight smirk.

'No, I mean, you're...' he said once more, chuckling slightly.

'What?' she snapped at him, frowning harshly that he was disturbing her sleep.

'You're old!' he snorted out, and got punched in the arm for his effort.

But no matter what Magie did, there was no mistaking it. Earlier, she was always the same. No matter how much time passed, or how much Harry changed, she looked exactly like the first time she appeared in his cupboard. Somewhere around eleven years old, straight hair of a shade that Harry could never guess with any amount of certainty, and those sky-blue eyes.

But now, she did change, and it seemed that she caught up with all those years, and then some. She grew, and way past Harry's height, if the place where she stuck her feet had anything to say. Her babyish face lost that cuteness about it, and became more refined. It was still the same face, but somehow more beautiful than before. Of course, some part of her anatomy... Harry swallowed hard, not lingering too long on those. He returned to her face, and she was staring at him with slightly raised brow, as if she was...

'You're old!' Harry exclaimed again, grinning, not allowing her to get an upper hand in their teasing game.

'And you're an insufferable brat!' she bit back, before showing him her tongue, and just how mature she was, or not. Harry grinned

more, seeing that even when she changed her appearance, she stayed all the same.

'Yeah, but you're still younger than me,' Harry commented happily. She harrumphed loudly, and turned away from him, taking all the sheets with her.

Harry grinned more, but now that she wasn't playing with him, he could notice other changes, most prominent being her hair. Earlier it was a mix of brown and blond, and he couldn't tell which of those was more in there. But now, the blond was mostly gone, if you didn't pay attention to some highlights here and there, just to be replaced with red. It wasn't just brownish-red, it was a more smoother mix, something as of burgundy, with only those lighter shades making the difference. Then again were her eyes, once clear sky-blue, but now they seemed more hazel-like, with light tones of green playing here and there. Harry thought about her change, about last night, and he just couldn't not think about his mother.

Magie was laying there with her back to him, and he couldn't stop himself from reaching out, scratching her head, and even humming part of that song that he still didn't know title off. Maggie sighed contently, and quickly fell asleep. Harry meanwhile...

There was a loud creak at the end of the room, and Harry sat upright. He was in the Hospital wing, and even if everything remained white, it lost that glow that it previously had. He glanced at the side of his bed, but Magie was nowhere to be seen.

'A dream.' Harry thought.

"Ah, Potter. You're finally awake," Madam Pomfrey that came from her office called to him. He made an attempt to reach for his glasses, only to notice that he was already wearing them. He smiled to himself after realising that it could be a little less of a dream than he first assumed.

"Three days asleep, that's quite usual," the school's nurse commented, more to herself than Harry. "Magical exhaustion is nothing to take lightly, young man," she said, making clear that he won't leave her care until she deems him fit to do so. Harry meanwhile was more busy with the connection between "magical

exhaustion" and the way Magie behaved, and how quickly she drifted off.

After Madam Pomfrey checked him three times over, she said he was well enough to receive guests. She haven't even finished the sentence when Hermione, Neville, Luna and even Rose came rushing in, and went over themselves to tell what exactly happened that day.

After they went after Hagrid, they made their way to the castle. They watched Pettigrew in case he came up with any plan to run, but one look at Hagrid and it was clear that he would far sooner turn him into mush than let him escape.

They arrived at the castle in time for the meal to begin, and Hagrid with his unbeatable judgement, went straight to Dumbledore, with Pettigrew in full view. Of course, Headmaster reacted as quickly as he could, getting the man locked, informing the authorities, and beginning to question the rat.

Then Fudge came, complaining about all this nonsense of man coming back to life being ridiculous, but by then, students that recognised Pettigrew for who he really was, related it to everyone else, and the story travelled through Hogwarts gossip network faster than the speed of light. No matter what he would try, news would get out this way or another.

After Hermione and Neville related the story of finding Sirius, skipping entirely where, and how they got there, they said that Harry wanted to hear the man's story. Since there was quick way to prove Sirius version, they went along, met Hagrid, found the rat, and brought him in.

About that time, someone was sent to retrieve the pair still waiting in the forest. But when they've returned, Harry and Sirius were unconscious, and a warning that Dementors were running rampant all around the forest.

Since Harry was completely exhausted, Sirius woke up first, and took the safer route of "tell me what you know, and I'll fill the blanks" when they came to question him. The main question on everyone's mind was why Harry wasn't scared of him, and he retold the time they spent together near Harry's uncle's house, telling jokes for

almost an hour. Saying that faces of the people listening to him were priceless was an understatement.

Then came that unpleasant part of Harry and Sirius, who by now everyone knew to be innocent, nearly being kissed by a swarm of Dementors. Sirius told that he was unconscious faster than he knew it, and Harry had to be the one responsible for chasing away the Dementors. No one knew how such a young boy who never learnt to do so might do that, but the state he was in certainly supported that claim.

His friends finished by relaying message from Sirius, saying that he was busy with getting back to life again, mainly boring paperwork dealing with his incarceration, release, money and property that were confiscated from him... Boring stuff, as he called it. But he promised that he will check up on Harry if he would have a moment.

Harry left Hospital wing two days later, with a prescription to not do any magic before the start of next term. He was heading to Gryffindor tower, to relax with his friends, but he haven't even made the first turn, when a voice disturbed him.

'This way,' he heard in his head. He turned, and saw Salazar, making his way in the other direction.

'What are you doing here? I'm not supposed to do any magic right now,' Harry said after he caught up.

'From what I know, hallucinating isn't a form of illusionism,' the Slytherin replied with a smirk on his face.

'Then where's Magie?' Harry asked what he thought to be an obvious question.

Salazar just glanced at him, 'Haven't you been paying attention? The young lady is exhausted right now,' he said, shaking his head with a sense of humour over the pun he just made.

'Okay, so, what are we doing?' Harry asked, still following his, somewhat, unusual mentor.

'Before we get to that, we must talk about something you did, and which disqualifies you as my apprentice,' Harry's face fell at this

statement. 'Because that thing you did, proves you are fit to be named young master of the art,'

Salazar begun, still making his way around the corridors of the castle, with Harry listening intently.

'We didn't have those things, Dementors you call them, in our times, and I have no idea where they might have came from, perhaps another magical experiment that went awry. But it's exactly what makes your actions so exceptional. A student is given a task, to recreate some effect. He knows where he is, what is the end result, he just needs to fill the gap within. A master in the field of magic faces difficulties without knowing where the solutions might lead him. And you did just that. That night you did spell you had never seen before, without knowing what exactly you were aiming for. You proved that a status of an apprentice is no longer fitting for you.'

'So, what do I do now?' Harry asked.

'Oh, don't assume that you are done learning. You know much, but there is far more to learn. Even with what I remember now, I don't think I know the third of what my former self knew.' Salazar commented, stopping at an intersection, looking like he couldn't decide which turn to take.

'I meant to ask about it for a while now, how much do you know, exactly?' Harry asked.

'And how much do you know?' Salazar responded, finally going further. 'I mean, do you remember every second of your life? Have you memorised all of the books you have ever read? Of course not, there is too much of it. I merely remember enough to make sense of it. Sometimes I remember precise instructions for myself. Other time I can't make sense of something until I compile things my former self must have deemed obvious, but once I make those observations, it comes back. I think the most of which I don't remember, are really advanced things. But I wouldn't have to, since as master goes further into his own studies, he works on his own style, and explores things that suit him best. I just have to take you take far enough for you to...Ah, here it is,' Salazar exclaimed after stopping in front of bare length of wall.

Harry quickly glanced around, and the only thing in this particular corridor seemed to be a tapestry of a man, who looked like he was teaching trolls to dance.

'Would you please walk back and forth three times, thinking about that room? Leave the description of what exactly that means, to me,' Salazar said, bringing Harry from his observations.

Harry was confused, but did as he was told, pacing back and forth, thinking about a room. On his last pass, a door appeared.

'Shall we come in?' Salazar proposed, waiting for Harry to open the door, since he couldn't do it himself.

Harry twisted the handle, but after entering the room, there was nothing but blackness, and after the doors were closed, it could be as if nothing aside from Harry and Salazar existed in the world.

'What is this place?' Harry said, trying to look around, but the moment he lost track of Slytherin, it felt like looking with your eyes closed, given the overwhelming darkness.

'This used to be Rowena's laboratory,' Slytherin said, 'I told you once that this castle was built by wizards trying to explore what exactly could be done with magic. While we were wondering ways to apply it, Rowena concentrated on finding out where it all came from. World, people, but mainly, magic. This became as a laboratory, but in time, with her adding charms and testing theories, it became like this. This is what I think she summarised to be the very beginning,'

'You mean, complete darkness?'

'No, of course not. I mean this room in its entirety. It's far beyond my understanding. I just know that when those doors appear, the room takes a certain form. But outside of that, I'm not even certain if it exists, if we take existence as we know it. What I mean as the beginning, is how she imagined world begun, how magic worked at the start of time. Just imagine, forming world with a mere thought, and doing nothing like magic as we know it.'

'You mean, something along "God's creation"? Is that even possible?'

'I guess, we'll never know. I don't think she made any progress from the time I left the castle. This room can change into pretty much any form you desire, yes. But it doesn't last. You can do anything you want while inside, but it's an entirely separate world. If it would be finished, you could step here, wish for something, and then take it outside to use it as you wish. Here, if you wish a glass of water and drink it, once you step outside, it will simply vanish from your veins, and you will find yourself parched. As I see the wizards now, I'm even glad that it's this way. The things wizards could do to one another if they had all they wished for.' Salazar said with a sigh, then noticed something else, 'But I guess that Rowena wouldn't be pleased that this room is forgotten. It was meant to be perfect place for future great minds to test their theories in safe environment. For students to learn and broaden their understanding.'

'Then what's with the pacing in front of the blank wall?' Harry asked, at which Salazar chuckled slightly.

'That was Rowena's joke. She used to say "I'll know a thinker like me, simply by the fact that he can walk three times around the castle, still pondering the same problem".'

'Do you have anything like this of your own?' Harry excited, now seeing the value of such a room.

'Oh, no. I didn't work on anything of this kind, and once I left the castle, I took all my discoveries with me, which I'm afraid to say, are probably mostly forgotten like this room, or even lost or destroyed through time.'

'Okay,' Harry responded, although a bit sad about such great loss, 'So, what are we going to do now?'

'This,' Salazar stated shortly, before he slapped Harry across the cheek. Harry was thrown off balance by that sudden blow, but caught himself before falling.

"Hey! What was that... for," Harry shouted, catching himself that he was just punched by someone who shouldn't be there. He thought about it a while, then looked back at Slytherin, "Room that can create anything?" he asked, his voice thick with sarcasm.

"Yes," Salazar answered out loud, grinning broadly, "I was wondering how long it would take you to notice. Guess you needed some prompting. And this will be what we're going to do from this point on. You may know about magic, which doesn't mean that you can use it in real situation."

"But Magie is the one making things happen, and she's..."

"Right here," she said, walking from behind Salazar. Harry didn't comment, still remembering that he didn't know anything about this room, just noticed that she seemed to have that older look of hers for good.

"You are mistaken, thinking that this young lady will always do everything instead of you. And because you can't do magic freely, and finding a sparing partner, or a suitable place would be too much of a bother in the first place, we are going to use this room. It's much safer, more secure, and easier, since we won't have to clean any potential destruction that could come up from your training. Now, lets begin..."

Harry didn't know what to expect, but listening to Salazar so casually using words like "training" and "destruction" in the same sentence, it seemed that he would miss Woods training's, because knowing Slytherin, they would soon seem like walks in the park.

AN. I think that's how Room of Requirements works. Bringing everything down to it's basics, and turning it to something else. A really, REALLY advanced transfiguration, for shorts. The "junk room" that was described in the book, could be a good source for materials to transfigure. And, you can't take things CREATED in the room. If you bring something inside, it's just as easy to take it out.

Hey, at least once I thought of a thing that I and J. K. Rowling do have in common. In this case, getting couple of days of rest, don't end in piles of overdue work waiting to be done... Here the comparison ends, since I'm never going to get paid for writing this, no matter how hard I work on it.

AN. This chapter is sponsored by EnjoyEveryMoment...

It soon became apparent why Slytherin chose a completely empty room as their training place. The only thing inside of the room aside from Harry was his opponent.

"No matter what they do, how loud, flashy or irritating it may be, you keep track of your opponent!" was only thing Salazar said that day. Right after that, Harry lost track of him, and nearly got his ribs broken from his mentors surprise attack. As fond Salazar was of mind games, it didn't extend to combat training. After that initial advise, there was only one truth in their training. You made a mistake, you got hurt.

And talking wouldn't help in any case. Fighting is not about knowing the facts and reading the books; it's about doing. If you ever went to a martial training, learnt some techniques, maybe even broke a sweat... don't think yourself to be skilled in art of combat. If you look at a punch, it's nothing, really. Just another way of extending your arm. What makes you a fighter, is not knowing that you can do a decent punch. It's all this time – months, years, decades even – that you spent training. Only because all of that, you know that when the time comes, you can handle yourself, that you won't even have to think about it, you'll just do it. As far as the psychology of combat goes, it's just a way of playing with your enemy's mind, so that his own mind, be it by fear, anger or simple doubt, will start contradicting their muscle reflexes.

But Harry wasn't there yet. Firstly, he had to know by instinct how to handle himself in a wizards fight. How to weight distances between himself and his opponent, consider chances between attack and defence, or simply predict what kind of unknown will come next. Of course, the most important thing for him was to learn how to cooperate with Magie.

Slytherin was right saying that she couldn't do everything on her own. While in every day situations she seemed like any other person,

her behaviour in a combat situation became something entirely else. Maybe it was because of Harry's inexperience with serious combat, and due to connection between him and Magie, but it soon became clear that she couldn't follow his every "want". If she would, then either Harry would be tossed around while she tried to do everything, or Magie would go crazy trying to think of what was the most important thing to do.

The only time that they didn't have problems with that, was when Harry was in life threatening situation and had no means to save himself. She would then do anything, everything, to get him safe again, just like she did so many times in the past. It was no surprise either, since self-preservation is one of the things every human being have in common. People are so much quicker to defend them self, and their own, if not outright run, than to fight back, thus the training needed to be considered a warrior. Of course, those who don't run away at the sight of violence, even at young age, are considered as punks and menace, and not as fighters from birth, who, given little changes here and there, could become guardians of their community.

So, even if Magie would want to take Harry away from all the dangers, given her newly found "maternal instinct", it would only hinder his performance, if he would have to fight against his opponent... and her. On the other hand, if Magie was left on her own, she would much faster win a fight by tiring her opponent out with dodges and blocks, than by her combat skills. Truth be told, she hasn't delivered a single blow in all the time they had fought or trained. Ever.

Given all that, their training time was spent on learning who would do something best, and when, with Magie concentrating on defence, Harry learning how to attack by using powers he thought to be hers, and hers alone. And of course, developing tactics that they could use just by calling a single word.

Of course, during all that, there were many mistakes between them, and what followed with it, Harry got hurt plenty of times. Some time after they started, he even begun working on a cover story for all the bruises, in case anyone would ask, just to discover that they were gone once he stepped out of the room, which couldn't be said about the pains he was experiencing.

When he questioned Salazar about that, he answered that it was much easier to make one person "more transparent", as he called it, than to attempt constructing two additional bodies that were entirely solid. Since Harry's body had to reform at one point, Slytherin thought it a good idea to leave effects of the training, without the effects of the blows. Of course, he didn't tell Harry that it would hurt so much more, and seeing that Salazar didn't really care, he wondered about how all stories had that grain of truth in them, and history might be right that Slytherin was an outright...

Christmas in Gryffindor Tower this year was something special. Well, at least for Fred and George Weasley it was.

Sirius came himself to give Harry his presents, and to catch up. At first, everyone behaved strangely around him, but since Sirius was who he was, it gave him the opportunity to fool around. When the Weasley twins caught wind of that, it wasn't long before a case of one, very overused map came up, and then all hell broke loose.

The Twins didn't know if to question Sirius about his adventures, or tell him about their own "achievements". It was probably the strangest case of their double-speech, with the two of them telling only half a sentence, but each trying to speak only on one topic mentioned above. Since Sirius was there to catch up with Harry, and the Twins couldn't be interrupted, their monologue quickly changed to a drama in three acts, about how Harry came to Hogwarts. First act depicted how they took him under their wing:

"He was so young, so innocent, and yet so..." George continued with the story, in a dramatic voice.

"BLIND!" finished Fred, who was successful in taking Harry's glasses, needing it as a prop, but only now put it on his nose.

The second act was how he matured, and surpassed even Twins expectations. The third act was never shown, because Sirius nearly passed out, he was laughing so hard when he heard about some of the things Harry had done.

"Okay, you convinced me," Sirius said, finally being able to breathe again.

"What?" Harry asked, not knowing what magnificent idea he might have gave his godfather. Truth be told, he didn't even wanted to know what happened in Sirius' head.

"Marauders should be back in business," he stated, at which there was a complete silence in the group, because Fred and George looked like they might explode from the excitement.

"You mean, something like Marauders: Reactivation?" Harry asked, breaking the silence.

"No, rather something like Marauders: New Generation!" Sirius stated, doing that slogan hanging in the air gesture with his hand.

Harry just snorted, "Yeah, Marauders: version 2.0."

"Don't be so technical, think along the lines of, Marauders: Second Blood. You know, first one was good, but second can be better!"

"Who said that the first one was good?" Harry asked, confused.

"Hey, now you're just being mean," Sirius whined, making Harry sound more mature than his own godfather.

"Ah, at last some alcohol in the tower!" cheered Harry. "Don't tell me you've kept this bottle of wine just for this occasion. What are we celebrating?"

"Our next prank," Sirius stated simply.

"Which is?" Harry asked, rolling his eyes at how confused people listening to them must be.

"You tell me, you're the leader," Sirius said, taunting his godson and grinning evilly.

"Why do I have to be the leader?" Harry asked, not understanding his godfather's logic. Truth be told, he doubted Sirius understood his own logic.

"Because I'm too cool to be the responsible one, I'm more of a rogue," Sirius decided, staring off into the distance as he complementated his statement.

The rest of the group watched the entire exchange, and suddenly knew that living with Harry Potter could be even more bizarre than he was so far. If only they would know better...

"Okay, I had this one idea, but I don't know how to make it into something special..." Harry proposed, scratching his head, but even he had time to start explaining.

"Don't," Sirius interrupted.

"Don't, what?"

"Don't overcomplicate things. Life is funny as it is. You just need to tweak a thing or two to let people see the humour." Sirius said, but he didn't even finish, when Harry's eyes literally lit up. "You see, you've got it. Now, what's my part?"

"You? You do nothing," Harry said with a smile.

"Hey! That's no fun!" Sirius protested, his brow scrunching together in frustration and crossing his arms. He reminded Harry of Dudley when a new video game came out and he wasn't the first to get it.

"Oh, no. Just listen to me. Stay at the castle, catch up with Remus, take a stroll around the grounds or something like that, but do... nothing." Harry said, after which he began to describe state Slytherin House was in, and what exactly he had in mind to "help things along". When he finished, Sirius thought that doing absolutely nothing was truly a great thing to do.

Christmas time passed, and couple of days later, students came back to prepare for another semester of studying. This year though, there was something unusual waiting for Slytherin students, when they came back to their dormitories. There, on their nightstand's, waiting for each and everyone of them, was waiting a small Christmas present. Unusual, because normally it would be sent to them one way or another, so it could be opened with every other. What made it so much stranger, was that they all were empty. No one had any idea what it might be all about, but they forgot about it soon enough.

Only one person in the entire house was exception of this, since she had a general idea what it was about, and her present wasn't entirely empty. But Rose thought that it wouldn't be wise to be bragging about either of those... Especially that she knew what would follow.

Draco Malfoy was laying in his bed, sleeping. Well, he was trying to sleep, but couldn't, since a noise of tapping was constantly reaching his ears. No, it wasn't exactly tapping, he decided. It was rather like someone would drum their fingers on the table top. After twisting and turning in his bed, still not being able to fall asleep, he got so irritated that he threw down his pillow. The fabric hid the picture of his mother tucked under there, and he sat up in bed once more.

"Would you stop that already?" he shouted to the air, not knowing who was listening.

Other boys in his dormitory, now fully awake, looked at him like he was crazy. He just sneered at them. Now that the tapping stopped, he paid no mind to their discomfort. Why should he? They weren't exactly paying attention to his, either. With that in mind, he turned on his side, and went to sleep. There was no tapping to keep him awake, and he thought it was over. He didn't know that it was just the beginning.

I wish writing would be more like creating music, at least in one aspect. If that would happen, then I could name this story:

Harry Potter by God B. Damned (J. K. Rowling cover)

AN. EnjoyEveryMoment would be my producer.

Defence is probably the most important thing a wizard must learn. And it isn't only in combat. During Salazar times, when wizards were only experimenting in search of limitations of magic, so many things could, and often did, go wrong, that even if you didn't try to, you quickly became proficient in protecting your skin. Because if you didn't... well, let's just say that Stonehenge isn't a pile of rubble because a simple breeze blew on it.

But in a fight, it is even more important. Wizards who use wands can cast spells at any time. The drawback of that is that the energy must travel to the designed place, thus giving your enemy chance to duck or shield it. While wandless magic didn't rely on that, using energy that was "hanging in the air", you first needed to wait for air to saturate with it.

Even in the past, when sorcerers were at the side of nearly every king, their true value in combat situation wasn't show when they were the ones with greatest kill score on a battlefield; because any wizard who was at least somewhat smart, wouldn't allow there to be a battle in the first place. It was so much easier to delay the oncoming army with bad weather, bad footing, when ground would turn into marsh under their very feet making the march so much tiring, or by simply spoiling their supplies. Even when that army was so persistent as to siege the castle in such conditions, it was just as easy to make the wine soldiers drunk instead of bad water slightly stronger, to have all of them lying at your feet.

Wizards rarely waged war. Their preferred way was to wait, make their enemy tire themselves out by fighting a battle they didn't even see, and then simply gather the weapons from soldiers who were too weak to carry them any further. An outright battle between countries that had wizards in their council commenced only when the situation was truly hopeless, and it was far easier to let people kill each other, than to make them talk to one another. Even then, wizards seldom fought.

But when it came to a fight, defence became their first nature, and it was for two reasons. First being the aforementioned "energy in the air". If you were a wizard, the term "home field" wasn't just a nicety. Fighting a wizard on his ground, was fighting him on his terms, because he could do anything he wanted with everything around him. On the other hand, finding himself on enemy grounds, he could do things only in his imminent surroundings, situation getting better and better with every second he stayed there. But in that precious first moment, his defensive skills were the difference between life and death.

Second reason, was because of the difference in muggle and wizards weapons. Muggles, with their swords, spears, and arrows, could apply varying layers of plating or rely on their dodging skills. No matter what armour did they wear, it could always be pierced, but even then, with multiple wounds all across their body, they could still fight on, or at least find safety. Wizards couldn't count on usual armours, because with a single spell, it could be used against them. And they couldn't chance being hit, if only once, because suddenly they could find them self without any body at all.

That was the mindset Harry had to get into. That you defend first and foremost, and only when situation shows that your opponent won't relent, you can do with him anything you want. Of course, when the mage got that far, unleashing everything in his arsenal, his enemy found himself in a true world of pain. Still, he at least could say that he gave the guy a chance to rethink his position on the matter...

Chambers of the Slytherin House were like no other in the castle. Others had some designs to it, be it wing of the castle or it's tower. But Slytherin's dorms were underground, and if you would pass that initial stylish common room, you would find yourself in a maze. To give you some reference to it's general plan, imagine someone digging in a solid rock. Suddenly, they came to an obstacle, and instead finding a way to overcome it, just switched the direction they were digging and continued like nothing ever happened; but, what to do if you would come to a complete dead end? No problem there. Just back up 10 yards, pick a random direction, and continue.

After centuries of digging, many cave ins, excavations, remodelling's, findings of lost tunnels, rearranging, and generally trying to make sense of the whole mess, Slytherin dorms settled as a cluster of

rooms to which, even knowing how to get where they were going, no one could draw an exact map. It could be a good thing for an ambitious person who was trying to organise a secret meeting, but in a situation like...

"STOP BANGING ON THE WALL!" Draco shouted, bursting into the room he thought the sound was coming from. Of course, since it was middle of the night, and he hadn't had a good night's sleep lately, only now did he realise that he was shouting at a group of sixth year boys.

"Or, what?" asked one of them, standing from his bed, everything about him saying that he was not in the mood to have a conversation of any kind.

Draco quickly glanced around the room, weighted his chances to score one or two points at an unwritten score board, attempted to pull himself to his full height, as to appear mighty, his attempts spoiled by his nightwear, which would be more suitable on an elderly person.

"Or my..." he began to deliver his witty response, only to be interrupted by a chorus of:

"Yeah, your father will fire our fathers. We've heard it already." from everyone gathered in the room, which made him scowl.

"As for the banging, I think you can see it's none of us. Try room on the other side," one of the guys said, tapping a wall near him, "I think it's from that direction that yesterday's wails came from,"

"Nah, I checked it. It must be coming by the pipes." responded another one, woken up by the commotion "By the way, who would bang the pipes at two in the morning?"

"Bloody ghosts, I tell you." murmured the last occupant of the room, whom everyone else thought to be asleep.

"Shut up! All of you! I want to catch at least some sleep." said the first one, going back to sleep. "You still here?" he snapped at Malfoy, noticing him still standing in the door.

Draco sneered at them one last time, and went back to his own bed, hoping that banging did stop. It wasn't the only encounter of that type that night. In fact, over the last few days, there was surprising amount of similar conversations. But all the people, minding their own business, haven't exactly noticed a certain pattern, the most prominent give-away being that younger years were spared the misfortune everyone else was experiencing. And certainly, no one paid attention to a first year girl, strangely fascinated with what seemed to be a simple tabled. But if it was what it seemed to be, why would she be spending so much time on it, especially when everyone else went to sleep...

Over time, situation in Slytherin House grew from bad to worse. Earlier, students from that house had to fight other houses, as to be seen as the better ones, and on top of that, continue that never ending "king of the hill" battle in their minds. Now, they had to fight their own bodies, which, given the growing lack of sleep, weren't doing so well. But still, they had to muster the strength to play the "I'm better than you" game, because every sign of weakness would be used against them. That, even more, forced behaviour, made the encounters that, from the start weren't exactly subtle, more vicious and humiliating, since no one had the strength to keep it going. There weren't any cases of physical violence, what with Slytherins preferring mind games and verbal abuse, but words can only take you so far...

It was good for them that their Head of House was on top of his game. Or was he?

"Something is going on, and I know it's them. It's always them!" Severus kept muttering, while pacing his office. "First you have a werewolf, and now that wretched Black! They're multiplying, I tell you! As if Potter wasn't enough! Potter, why you..." Potion's Master stopped so he could make the strangling motion with his hands at the exact height. "It's their fault. It's always their fault." Snape muttered, starting to pace again. "It can't be a coincidence that they're all here, all of a sudden. There must be a reason..." He stopped because a certain thought struck him. "They're planning something! I know it! I can feel it in my bones. I know that they're planning something... I don't know when, I don't know where... But they're planning to do something to me. Oh, they think that it will be that easy, don't they? I'll get them, I tell you! And when I do, they'll get expell- Bah! Prison! I'll get them into prison!"

This wasn't the only conversation of that type he had with himself that night, either.

AN. Sorry for the delay, but I had exams, more coming soon, and my awareness of that fact doesn't get along well with my writing. I think another two chapters, and this year should be done.

Since I didn't get any Valentines signed "For J. K. Rowling" today, I don't believe I'm her. Truth be told... I didn't get any Valentines, of any kind...

AN. EnjoyEveryMoment, tell me when you'll get the one I sent you.

Of course, it would be nice for the idea of protecting yourself until the attacker rethinks it to work every single time, but as we all know it, there are situations in life that require the use of force. It doesn't even have to mean combat.

While muggles and wizards of modern times have very little in common, their counterparts from nearly thousand years ago, lived basically the same kind of life. In those times, people still had to think ahead when it came to those basic needs of food and shelter, and as muggles hunted, wizards did as well. Even if any wizard could transfigure them self a knife or a bow on a whim, they still experimented for magical substitutes, or thought out better ways to catch their game. When it came to building shelter, excavating great blocks of stone or smoothing them out couldn't be achieved by well wishing. Some energy had to be put into it.

It is said that in a random room, there is, on average, at least a hundred of deadly objects, not counting the room itself. Not because it is assumed that every person keeps a well stacked gun-rack, just in case, but because any household object could be used to do harm. That was why, even a beginning magician could be a formidable fighter, given that he knew how to apply his limited knowledge. Because, the difference between creation and destruction doesn't need to be the tools that you are using, but the outcome you are trying to achieve.

Of course, wizards were more knowledgeable, wise and understanding, but seeing as they were still human, even that couldn't save them from sporadic occasions when their emotional side came to surface. Muggles struggled with their emotions. Wizards struggled so much more, because of their power to do anything, if only they wished for it.

Normally, a mentor would be there, to talk that young magic user through it, but given that magic community was only beginning to form, it wasn't so uncommon to hear a stray story of a wizard surrounded by tragedy. Salazar didn't know, or didn't left himself

memories regarding what was done with those kind of situation, he even wondered if that couldn't be the very first tear in muggle-wizard relations. But when it came to affairs between wizards, solution in form of duels was proposed. On top of dealing with the problem, duels served two purposes. First was that, since there was so little of them, no wizard wished for the other to die, banishment being the preferred solution, and unlike muggles, wizards closely watched their own. Second, it was easier to clean the destruction from designed place...

But when it came to duel itself, attack was rather important. With two wizards, people skilled at defence, it wouldn't be very effective if they stood there, defending against the attack that never came, but situations when duel ended before the first blow was dealt happened, when one of the two admitted greater skills, control or focus of his opponent.

While attacking, wizards used the same energy that in defending, and it was probably the most significant difference between wizards now and in the past. Casting spells with the wand required a person to cast in sequence, casting only one spell at a time. Wandlessly, wizard could do even a hundred things at once, given that he could think how magic worked in every case. Downside of that was that he would quickly run out of energy to use, leaving him without means to attack or defend.

Wizards from those two periods exhausted themselves in two different ways. Wand users didn't know the difference between physical or magical exhaustion. For them it felt like one and the same thing. Mages who were skilled in wandless magic, saw those as two different things. If wizard would constantly use magic that was coming from his body, like lighting the knot on an oil lamp, he wouldn't be any different than normal average person. He could still run, swim, fight, and of course, he would run out of breath by the physical exercise, but it would have nothing to do with the magic. The only way that wizard would experience magical exhaustion was for him to make his body deliver more magic than it was used to, say, instead of knot, lighting the oil itself. You will run on empty much faster than in the first case, and in case of wizards, much faster than they could replenish it.

That was why wizards thought that knowing yourself, is to be powerful. Because amount of magic available differed from person

to person, based on their age, health, or even, what was their usual behaviour, and knowing them self, their limits, they could never come up short with it.

Salazar's style was to prepare his own field, to play with his opponent, to do tricks on him, lay traps and deceive him for so long, all the time waiting in the shadows, then just deliver the finishing blow. That was how he acted, and his magic responded to it.

Harry on the other hand, preferred to improvise, thinking quickly on his feet. Maybe more precise comparison would be that he fought like he played Quidditch. He would be on the defensive, dodging, circling, observing. But if only the opportunity showed itself, he would speed for it, precisely aiming for the weakness in enemy's armour, no matter how small it would be.

During their training, not on one occasion, Salazar discovered the hard way that he himself had a lot more learning to do...

Sleep deprivation isn't the nicest thing you can experience in life. It isn't even near the middle of the list. With so many harmful effects, people should avoid loosing too much sleep, and treat any kind of insomnia as soon as possible.

But even if wizards lived longer than normal people and were generally healthier, no one ever tried to discover how they were different from muggles when it came to the way their minds worked. Or there was such a study, but the man responsible was Obliviated and study itself destroyed. Because the answer to that question was: Not as much as wizards would like.

Students living in the Slytherin house, although entirely unknowingly, were experiencing consequences of that fact. Not being able to fall asleep until late hours and being woken early, shortened their sleeping time from eight healthy hours, to five or six hours of restless sleep. Maybe it wasn't so evident at first, but over time those harmful side-effects kicked in. Irritability in itself have made already spiteful people a lot worse to live with, but it was nothing compared to what happened when confusion, memory lapses, and hallucinations came into play.

In environment like Slytherin common room, where everyone tried to think of ways how to end on top of things, no matter what would be

happening, hallucinations could only be about other people trying to stab you in the back. That in itself was disconcerting, but given the aforementioned confusion and memory lapses, it was blown into an outright paranoia, because everyone's minds filled the blanks with actual memories of people trying to get them in one way or another.

Rose knew when the time came to take cover. Any person with a little mind would notice it. Suddenly Slytherin common room became quiet. There was no more of the usual spats and quarrels. People sat as far away from each other as they possibly could without leaving the room. Perfect example of "calm before storm". Because in that state, it would require only a little spark to...

Severus Snape was a man with a mission. Given his hunch, he was certain that Lupin and Black would be trying something funny. He just had to catch them when they were setting things up. He was currently waiting, hidden behind a suit of armour in front of the werewolf's office, noting that the two of them were inside suspiciously long, and he should...

"Severus," reached him someone's voice.

"What!" he snapped at anyone stupid enough to disturb him. Then he noticed who it was. "Ah, Headmaster. What can I do for you?"

"I don't believe you have heard," Dumbledore said, gazing over his half-moon glasses at the man who was still hiding behind the suit of amour. "There is commotion in the Slytherin dorms"

"Ah! I knew it," Snape exclaimed, but instead of going in the direction of the dungeons, he turned and rushed to the door he was perviously observing. Albus regarded him with curious gaze for a while, but followed nevertheless, wanting to know what would come out of it.

"Surrender! Resistance is futile," Severus announced while bursting into the office with his wand drawn, and abruptly stopped short, as did Dumbledore when he came to his side, because the sight inside was truly something they weren't expecting to see.

Sirius Black and Remus Lupin were having a tea party. And no, it isn't just like having tea. It was more like a tea party little girls like to organise, with pretty pink tea set, which cupse were so small that

you could barely put a pinkie in the handle. There was everything on the table, and the only thing that didn't make it a perfect picture was that there were people and not plush toys sitting at the table. Although, Albus was wondering where he could have seen that little elephant plush toy with a mailing bag strapped on it's shoulder that was currently sitting on the mantle.

"Ah, Severus, Headmaster. How swell. Why don't you join us?" voice of Remus Lupin reached them, and he gestured for them to sit down. They also noticed that Sirius managed to empty his cup, which roughly gave half a sip of tea, and refill it three times in the time when Remus spoken to them.

"Oh, stop pretending! And stop messing with my house!" Severus demanded, building up steam again.

"Pardon?" was the only reply from the two.

"You know what I'm talking about! There is commotion in the Slytherin..." he begun to tell just how they were responsible, but he was interrupted.

"Oh, no. That couldn't be. Maybe we could be of service? Calming things down will be much quicker with more people." Remus was telling, even when they set things right on their little table, and cleaned their faces with napkins that could be roughly the size of a stamp.

"You're not going there, because it's all your fault!" Potions Master shouted.

"Excuse me?" Sirius exclaimed back, taking great offence at Snape's words.

"Severus, I think you should calm down," Dumbledore said, putting calming hand on his friend's shoulder.

"I'm perfectly calm, can't you see that?" he responded with a face of a madman. "It's their fault. They're controlling it somehow and I'm going to prove it." then he aimed his wand at the tea set and muttered an incantation. Nothing happened. "So, it isn't the tea set. Fine!" he said, after which he turned to another object and tried again.

For another minute or two, Remus, Sirius and Albus stood there, watching Snape run rampant all over the room, casting revealing spells on every object possible, even flowerpots and curtains.

"Headmaster, shouldn't we go? You were saying something about commotion in the dungeons," Sirius finally said.

"You boys go ahead. I think I need to speak with Severus in private," he responded, still watching his Potions instructor. Remus and Sirius looked at each other, shrugged, and went ahead to see what all the commotion was about.

It was probably for the better that the very first person to reach Slytherin common room was Professor McGonagall, a witch that had at least a little connection to the muggle world. Everyone else would come down and see her standing in the door, so they began to think what might have stopped in her tracks. But in that first instance, it took even her a while to connect all the dots...

She was running through the corridor, hearing banging noises coming from within, imagining all those explosions and destruction. She quickly gave the password, and even as the doors were opening she could see the smoke coming from inside, and through the crack, the lights travelling between the silhouettes. She thought how it was wrong for those young people to fight. But the very first sign that told her that something wasn't right between the image in her head and reality was the mirror ball spinning slowly under the ceiling.

Such an improbably item in a magic community stopped her at the threshold, and made her notice other details of the picture. The banging noise she thought to be the explosions, suddenly had a rhythm to it. Smoke wasn't dust like she thought, and wasn't coming from debris, but some machines hidden in the corners. Barricades in front of the entrance to the dormitories that she thought younger years took cover in, had a strange booth-like shape to it. The lights she could see before weren't spells, but just lights. And the people in the room, who she thought to be casting and dodging, and skipping to not be hit...

Suddenly it all became clear, and she stood there, dumbstruck, because it became apparent that everyone in the Slytherin house

were pranked AGAIN. First their common room was changed to a "Eel diner", and now... to a muggle discotheque.

AN. As you can see right at the beginning of this chapter, it was written around Valentines day. I had to go out to do some things... and I have completely forgotten about it. I thought that it was already posted. Sorry...

I should write another chapter in a day or two, which will be the end of 3rd book, and there should be more action in the following year, what with Tri-wizard Tournament and all.

I know it will come as a great shock to you, but I'm not J. K. Rowling. Seriously, I'm not... No, I will not sign that... No, you can't have one of my personal belongings... (being grabbed) Hey! Let go of me! (running away from the horde of fans...taking cover behind a dumpster) Now I remember why I don't want to be famous...

AN. It's good that EnjoyEveryMoment had a car parked around the corner or I wouldn't be able to escape the mob, and you wouldn't have this chapter now.

"When I first saw you I thought you have some secrets, but I would never... I mean, WOW. Pranking?" Remus said, still not believing the latest news he heard. "From your school-work I would assume that you were more like Lily, but just look at you..."

It was some time after the incident in Slytherin common room occurred that Harry and his friends, with Remus and Sirius as a bonus, were having a picnic on the grounds, enjoying one of the few free weekends before their end of term exams.

"Come on, tell us how you've done it," Sirius said, finally managing to catch his breath after another laughing fit, something he experienced every time he recalled the incident. "Not only to rearrange things for it to look like a discotheque, but to make everyone dance in it? Bravo maestro, bravo!" he applauded Harry's skills.

"You said it yourself that I shouldn't overcomplicate things. It was easy enough that you should be able to find out how it worked without my help," Harry responded from his place under the lonely tree that stood by the Black Lake, looking like he was too comfortable to respond, rather than giving the 'old guys' an opportunity to prove their skills.

"Okay, getting decorations there is easy. Shrink things and unpack them inside. Since it worked, you probably did exactly the same thing as the first time, right?" Remus voiced his thoughts, being the brainy one in the Marauders.

"Delivery wasn't quite the same, but close enough," Harry allowed, still leaning against the tree-trunk with his eyes closed.

"But the tricky part is, how did you get them on the 'dance floor'? " Sirius asked the obvious question, not wanting to be outdone by his friend. "I mean, you couldn't have confounded them all, could you?"

"I promise to you that I didn't cast a single spell on anyone from Slytherin," Harry said, smiling, because he knew how much his godfather was irritated about now knowing how it had been done, and that he hadn't thought about it before. "To tell you the truth, I, personally, had nothing to do with them..."

Sirius and Remus stopped at that, thinking about what he just said, about his choice of words, and just when they were trying to ask "But who did?"

"You're starting the party without me?" someone's voice reached them from just over the hill. Then that someone came into view, and the adults sat there, quite shocked. Never before had they seen any Slytherin simply walk to a mixed group of students, hand an elephant toy to Harry, since Luna was giving sunbathing another try, and take a place on their blanket like it was the most normal thing to do. Okay, even without a strange toy in the middle, it was still a peculiar sight.

"No way," Sirius muttered, staring at the young girl that just came into picture. "Don't tell me you convinced a Slytherin to do the dirty work for you," he asked Harry, at which Rose snorted.

"Nope. We just share the same belief," Harry responded while playing with Seizie.

"Which is?" Sirius asked impatiently, drumming his fingers on the brightly coloured, and knowing his grandson, possibly enchanted, blanket.

"That ambition is pointless if you don't have anything to back it up with, " Rose responded, seeing as Harry wasn't going to be helpful. "Slytherin House have more traits than just ambition, cunning being the closest. It's just that people seem to forget about it and quarrel about things that aren't there in the first place. Slytherins as they are now just irritate me to no end," she said with disgusted face, making Remus and Sirius exchange glances. "So, they had to see just how idiotic they are," she finished with a shrug.

"But still, how did you make them dance?" Sirius demanded, being on the brink of pouting.

Harry just chuckled for a while. "Show them," he said simply.

Rose fished a small tablet out of her pocket and handed it to Remus. At first it seemed as nothing strange, just a pad with buttons on it. It was only when he noticed labels on those buttons that he became completely stupefied.

"A fly, dripping water, tapping, snoring, wails, banging... What the hell is this?" Remus asked, handing the tablet to the now-very-interested Sirius. Harry just chuckled more.

"I told you once. Sirius telling me not to overcomplicate things just solved everything. I suddenly thought, how Slytherin's, the elite they thought they were... how would they deal with things that normal, average person deals with while living in a box of flats."

"Furniture moving... Holy crap! Tap-dancing?" Sirius exclaimed, still getting through some of the more interesting things on the list.

"Okay, I might have overdid it. But just a little," Harry admitted.

"He told me how it worked, and told me to play with the buttons whenever I liked," Rose piped in. "I think the "timer" button got slightly worn off."

Remus blinked at the two. "Let me get this straight. You two managed to turn entire Slytherin house into a bunch of insomniacs? You're evil, you know that, right?"

Harry just chuckled again, and it wasn't best thing he could have done, because right at that moment he was petting Seizie like any Dark Overlord would do with his pet. Seizie didn't help at all, staring back at Remus with her unblinking button-eyes.

"In that state of mind they could have done something stupid as hurt one another," Remus continued, maintaining his status as the most responsible in the group.

"You really think that any person that is so superior as average Slytherin is could do anything without their wand?"

"Now I know that you're making things up. You couldn't disarm the entire house without rising suspicion." Sirius said while shaking his head.

"Hey, is it my problem that they don't keep track of where their wands are? Or that they can't distinguish a proper wand from a piece of wood?" Harry said with that irritating kind of smile that people achieved only when they knew more than the person they were speaking to.

"Okay, I'm understanding less and less with every passing minute. Could you please tell us how it all worked?" Remus finally asked, huffing in exasperation.

"If you're asking so nicely how could I say no?" Harry begun. "It's quite easy, actually. You charm boxes you smuggle decorations in, to emit certain sounds and store a wand when you ask it to," he stated the words like they explained everything.

"No, wait, it wouldn't work. How would you get that many boxes inside without raising suspicions, and you can't simply state that it 'stores a wand'; I don't know any charm that would react to that. Not saying anything about how much you bet that those boxes would stay there to emit those sounds," Remus pointed out, probably not remembering any more that they were talking about something that had actually worked.

"Many boxes exchanged during Christmas isn't that suspicious. And you just need to add to the package a note saying 'Touch with your wand to open', and it works fine," Harry said with a casual shrug.

Sirius' jaw dropped. "And every single Slytherin touched his wand to something just because a note said them to?"

Rose snorted at that. "Not only that, after the few first noticed that there were empty, others thought that it was some kind of lottery, so they were basically fending each other off."

"Wait, but you said open. Wouldn't that show them what's inside?" Remus asked.

"Even if you can't see anything, it doesn't mean that there's nothing within," Harry responded while pointing at sleeping Seizie.

"But they should have thrown it away. I mean, who would keep an empty gift-box?" Sirius voiced an obvious question, seriously wondering what other strange habits the Slytherins had. And if people could use them to their advantage, but he didn't tell anyone that.

"Ah, but you forget that we're talking about people that think they're above everything. They think their garbage vanishes by itself, Harry continued explaining, wondering why some people skimmed over obvious things. Maybe because it was just so obvious. "Meanwhile, House-elves that clean the castle, like any other House-elf, feel the purpose of an object, or lack of thereof. If an object served its purpose, it's garbage which should be cleaned up. But if at least one person feels that it should be there... Well, that's entirely different story."

"Who cleans the castle?" Hermione interjected, tearing herself away from her book when Harry mentioned house-elves. Harry seeing her penetrating gaze just mouthed 'later', knowing that she would need an in-depth explanation. She wasn't pleased by that, he knew that from the look she gave him, but he also knew that she would have to wait.

"And you're telling me that they haven't noticed those boxes still lying around, and haven't connected it to the mysterious sounds that begun appearing?" Remus' voice brought him to their previous conversation.

"I told you; they're idiots," Rose repeated herself.

"So you didn't charm them to dance?" Sirius asked in the end. "Then what was that all about?"

"That was the mighty and superior house of Slytherin having an open fight in their own common room," Harry delivered with a straight face.

There was exactly five seconds of utter silence, and after that Sirius descended into another fit of uncontrollable laughter.

"But you're telling me that they haven't noticed they weren't casting any spells?" Remus asked, dumbfounded.

"Seeing just how under-slept they were, I wondered how they were standing," Rose said, raising her eyebrows slightly.

"And why do you suppose there was so much light in that room?" Harry said with a smile. "I would bet you could count one for every single person in that house." That was the final straw on the camel's back for Remus, and he too couldn't hold his laughter.

"And that's what I call cunning," Rose said in a way that just Harry could hear. "Make people fight with each other and mask it as a prank. And while everyone is looking for the second meaning, or the cover up story, they don't even expect that what they've just seen is the cover story and the second meaning is just an insult to the injury," she said with a smile and then frowned because he didn't respond. He just sat there with that infuriating knowing smile on his face, like there was still more to it... Harry Potter knew all too well that his fun was far from over.

"Okay, now spill it," Hermione demanded when there was only her and Harry left. He just smiled at her in a 'need to know' fashion.

"Do you think that we're learning about every single magical animal there is during Care of Magical Creatures?" Harry asked, always beginning his explanations with a question.

"Of course not," Hermione replied immediately.

"But how many sentient magical beings can you name? Not counting goblins of course."

That stopped Hermione short, because quite frankly, she haven't thought about it before.

"That's the thing. People seem to think that if in mundane world you have only us, humans, then there of course is only one equivalent in magical community. But truth is, there is more than that. And there was even more, before they begun to die out. Now if you ask about House-elves, you must know that bonding them self to humans was their way of adapting to changing circumstances. Their way of

surviving. At first they were like another person in the family, helping here and there, and working for their stay by housework. It was only when people noticed that they had no other place to go that they begun to be mistreated, and in time, turned into slaves,"

"But that's horrible! We should help them!" Hermione exclaimed, and Harry noticed where her train of thought was going.

"Let me show you," he simply said, and then called, "Dobby!"

"Yes, Harry Potter?"

Hermione turned her head sharply to watch the person who seemed to just appear out of thin air. She was about to comment that it wasn't possible to apparate on Hogwarts grounds, but then she noticed something peculiar about that small person.

Nearly a year with a 'proper' wizard did wonders to Dobby. He no longer looked like a dried prune, and even if he still had wrinkles. He reminded her more of an older person than the shrivelled humanoid creature he was before. The only thing that hadn't really changed was his height, and even if he stood straight, no longer covering, he still was barely half the size of an adult person.

But it wasn't how he looked that shocked Hermione the most, but his attire. He was wearing an old fashioned tuxedo, with a strangely looking white flower in the pocket on his chest. She looked at him and all she could think of was a picture of the perfect butler.

"Was Harry Potter needing anything?" Dobby questioned, bringing Hermione back from her constantly deep thoughts.

"Harry, is that..." she left the question hanging, then turned back to her friend. "Don't tell me you own a house-elf," she snapped in shock.

"No, I don't. He's my room-mate." Hermione had a confused look on her face, so he explained further. He was doing a lot of that today. "He uses my room at the Dursley's when I'm not there. In return he keeps it clean, helps around the house a little, you know, normal stuff. By the way Dobby, how're things going over there?"

"Harry Potter's relatives are doing well. Although Harry Potter's uncle is beginning to wonder why he hasn't needed to trim the grass for the last few months," Dobby responded while looking around the grounds.

"Harry, why does he keep calling you by your full name?" Hermione interrupted, focusing on small things to help herself deal with the big picture.

"Ah, that's why I called Dobby here. By the look in your face that you had just a minute ago, I think you had the idea to immediately free all the elves in the world," Harry said, and that soft blush on Hermione's face was all the answer he needed. "But you can't do that. House-elves are quite different from us. Think of it as a country on the other side of the globe. Even if you don't understand the customs, you can't simply tell everyone to do as you tell them. Take for instance your question. Dobby calls me by my full name because in the house-elf community, everyone has a single word name, like Dobby here. So basically, he thinks that Harry Potter is somehow one word. An average elf will refer to a person the way they have been introduced, even if you include all of their titles into it. Isn't that right, Dobby?"

"I believe that Harry Potter is right," the elf responded, still watching the grounds.

"So, if you will try to free a house-elf like they are now, you probably will meet a response suitable if you would be trying to murder them."

"But we must do something. I mean, you said it yourself that Dobby is free," Hermione said, not liking that there would be nothing she could do to help the poor creatures.

"Yes, Dobby is free. But I'm talking about an average house-elf, and the truth is, they don't know how to be free. Even look at Dobby. He was an house-elf of the Malfoys'." That piece of information shocked Hermione. "Since Malfoys are idiots, and purebloods to boot, which technically makes it official, they've mistreated him, not understanding that every sentient animal experiences stress. Give him some space, and he dealt with it, but even now, look at him."

Hermione turned again, and watched Dobby standing there for a while.

"So?" she asked, not noticing anything strange.

"You don't see it?" Harry prompted.

"What am I looking for? He's just standing there," Hermione snapped back, slightly irritated that she was missing something that was probably so obvious.

"That's just it, he's standing there. Or more exactly, waiting."

After Harry said that, she did notice that slight difference. At first she thought that Dobby was standing there admiring the views. Why standing? Maybe he didn't want to dirty his tuxedo... But now it indeed looked like he stood, almost at attention, just waiting for something to do.

"You see, you can't free a house-elf, because he wouldn't know what to do with it. House-elves don't know how to be free. A free house-elf will try to find a new master, or simply something to do. If not, then they will despair, since they have the need to be useful in their blood. And you can't give them anything different than servitude right now, because the problem that brought them to this kind of life still stays unsolved."

"Which is?" Hermione questioned absent-mindedly, still observing Dobby. Only when she didn't get any reply from Harry did she turn, just to see him staring at the darkening sky.

"Next year," he said, finally turning to her. "I know that you need to know, but to explain it properly we would need more time than we have now. And I don't want to start it now and not be able to finish, because you just might blow up over the summer," at which Hermione smiled sheepishly.

She thought about it for a while, but nodded in the end, trusting him just enough to keep her curiosity at bay. While Hermione went ahead, Harry stayed to say goodbye to Dobby. But when he was trying to catch up with her:

'At last you're getting on with it,' said a voice that he knew all too well.

'With what; Hermione?' he asked, at which Salazar looked at him curiously.

'No, I meant acquiring your own apprentices. You wouldn't be able to change everything by yourself.'

'Yeah, I know,' Harry muttered tiredly.

'But,' Slytherin added, 'That young lady is rather nice if I can say so myself.'

Harry didn't comment, just smiled at the idea of his master approving of... He stopped short, and looked at the girl waiting for him by the gates. Silently, he simply smiled.

Examination period went by in a flash, with the usual chaos of panicking students over-exaggerating their mistakes. Harry and his friends, given their regular studying, they had no problems with passing their exams, even if Hermione kept complaining about how they could have had better scores, even before the results were posted. Given all that, they were usual exams.

It was, until it didn't come to the Divination exam. Harry was the last person, and just as he was going to walk out after he was done, something stopped him in his tracks.

"It will happen tonight," said an ominous voice. He turned just to come face to face with Sibyl Trelawney who, even being just inches from him, didn't seem to notice that he was there. Instead, she was speaking to the entire room, hoping that anyone would listen.

"The Dark Lord lies alone and friendless, abandoned by his followers. His servant has been chained these twelve years. Tonight, before midnight... the servant will break free and set out to rejoin his master. The Dark Lord will rise again with his servant's aid, greater and more terrible than ever he was. Tonight... before midnight... the servant... will set out... to rejoin... his master..."

Then she collapsed on the floor, and when she opened her eyes again, she seemed to be convinced that she must have slipped and lost consciousness.

Harry didn't question that story, thinking his Divination teacher deserved some credit after all. He went to contact Sirius, telling him all about the prediction, and Sirius took it on himself to make sure that Pettigrew stayed locked. They Harry waited. But in the morning nothing happened, Pettigrew didn't run, and Harry was left disturbed by the fact that a true prophecy had to be fulfilled, one way or another...

Obliviation is an art of erasing memories from the minds of the subject. Yes, it deserves a title of art. Seeing just how complicated human brain is, it isn't quite that easy to remove something, without messing everything else up. Slytherin, of course would make comment that it was a stupidity, a child's play, or something more insulting. A big hole in a memory is too obvious of a sign that there is something wrong. A master of sorcery would at least cover it up by remodelling memory for the subject to go around the entire event, thus not noticing the gap. It was relatively easy too, just fill the gap with another memory, something dull and boring would be good, and smooth out the edges for it to fit, giving a perfect picture of a day no one would want to remember in the first place. But still it was too much work. There are so many ways to make someone forget something, like convincing them that the entire thing was a vivid dream. A very vivid one indeed...

But no matter how you manipulate one's memory, you can't entirely remove the effects of it from the person's life. Average person suffering from amnesia still can write, maintaining the same handwriting, or speak in any language they know. The thing is, that person doesn't remember where or when they learnt to do that. So, even if you would oblivate persons entire memory, leaving the mind itself intact, you still wouldn't have removed everything. The greatest shortcoming being muscle memory.

Bartemious Crouch Sr., over couple of weeks after the end of school year, begun questioning himself over some actions he was performing. At first he thought that it was just slight memory loss from overworking himself. He didn't remember where he might have left half of his clothes, or what he had done so his own House-elf wasn't behaving like she used to. Then he caught himself on checking his wife's bedroom every hour or two. From that point on he slipped into depression, thinking about his wife. About a part of his life that was missing.

And of course, he was right. There was a part of his life that was there one minute, just to be gone another. He just couldn't remember that he was mistaken about who it was...

AN. This chapter doesn't look entirely like I imagined it, but it will have to do.

Does anyone know when the J. K. Rowling look-alike contest is held? I want it official that I'm not her... or at least not like her in any way.

AN. I heard somewhere that I should enjoy every moment that I spend with EnjoyEveryMoment... Do you guy sometimes have a deja vu?

Even if Harry was mentally preparing himself for even a slight surprise when he arrived from school, as it was at this point usual, he didn't quite expect the scale of the change. That year, coming back to the Dursley household was like entering a completely different world. And no, it had nothing to do with magical and muggle community.

Up until this point in time, the house of the Dursley family was like a mosquito drowned in amber that you can see in some museums. Well, no, it didn't quite resemble mosquito. It was that it always looked the same. At some point, or maybe over time, the interior of the house was changed into a perfect 'How a house of a happy family should look like' exhibition, and with Petunia's cleaning habits, you could bet that things were always were they were meant to be. As far as Harry remembered, the house was always the same way.

This year though, it changed. And to say it was simple would be a lie. The change was radical. Dursley's not only rearranged their furniture. They completely refurnished their house. Old couches that would fit perfectly in a conference room were thrown away, being replaced by something you wouldn't mind spending entire evening in, or even sleeping on it the entire night. Vernon even bought an armchair he always wanted to have, but it didn't quite go along well with the previous set up. Even the 'official' paint colour from the walls was replaced with something you could look like and not think of a waiting room. Seeing just the living room when he stepped into the house, Harry couldn't believe how the same building, with same people, and just a little paint, suddenly felt so much more cozy.

He then received the greatest shock when it came up that the bulk of the job was done by his uncle, with the help of Dudley whenever he was around. Harry thought that there was no way that his uncle didn't hire an entire crew to do the job spot on, and was just joking around. Then he started noticing things.

His aunt no longer stayed all day long by the window, spying on other people, instead bringing her long forgotten knitting set, writing letters to some long lost friends that she actually knew, or simply doing a crossword puzzle once in a while. His uncle didn't sit in front of the TV all day long after he got back from work. He helped Dudley with his training when he was there, or just did something around the house that was actually fruitful, or just plainly fun, like wrestling his son to the ground once in a while.

Seeing all that, Harry thought that it's strange how much changed since the visit of Marge last summer. Now his uncle laughed more, his aunts smile wasn't all that forced, and for the first time in his life, Harry wondered if staying away during Christmas wasn't such a good idea...

Of course, then his restless brain spoiled that by thinking about the word 'change'. There was something that he have forgotten during his magical training with Slytherin, and only now remembered to ask Sirius about.

Couple of days later he got back a letter from Sirius, which begun with how proud he was that his godson was following the footsteps of such great people. Of course, knowing Sirius, he was talking about himself, Harry thought. But as he was going through the list of books that could be useful, potions he would need to brew, and general list of exercises... a disgruntled noise caught him by surprise. He turned just in time to notice Salazar fading out of view. So, he lay down in his bed, and getting into meditative state he learned so long ago, followed his mentor into his own sub-consciousness.

"What? What's wrong?" Harry asked, finally catching up to Slytherin on a small hill near the marsh his house was in.

"Are you kidding me?" his mentor replied angrily. "Drink some potions, follow schedule of exercise sessions and you're done? This is bloody ridiculous. They've done a mockery out of the process, like always getting things to the point when a moron could do it. Point one: switch off your brain. Point two: Mindlessly follow orders," he snarled.

From time to time, Harry could see why it was so easy to portray Slytherin as a person of the worst kind.

"I remember stories of the real thing," he continued in a more sedated voice, "Once, our culture was based on a tribal system, and so, there were hunting tribes scattered all around the world. Those people, when they went for a hunt, they didn't read tracks. They didn't try to decipher what they mean. Instead, they stopped thinking, and started being the animal itself. They would run where the animal had run, crawl when it did. They'd jump, rest, eat, and do everything else just like the animal had done. From their own instincts they knew where the animal went, simply by following the flow of the tracks. They weren't tracking. They were animals going the same way their predecessor did. When wizards were born in those tribes and were proficient enough in tracking, they simply switched their form," Salazar told him with a faraway look. "Now? Drink something to know what is the form you can achieve easiest, and then slowly pull that skin on yourself? I think the only thing stopping every person from doing it is the lack of skills in wandless magic to do the exercises that are bloody pathetic," he snapped, getting angry again.

"So, you have to spend years to become an animagus?" Harry asked out of interest, and partly to get Slytherin out of his bad mood.

"Yes, it is a proper way," Salazar responded, getting back on track, "I constantly remind you how understanding is important in wizards life, and this is an example of that. But," he stopped, searching something in his memory, "there is another way. It is faster, but tricky. And I don't have to tell you that faster is the opposite of safer, don't I?"

"Yes, I know, but if someone would like to do that?" Harry pressed on.

"Then you would have to..." Slytherin begun to explain, but had no chance to finish as Harry lost his consciousness, being hit with something on the back of his head. As his body started to fall, Salazar could see Magie standing behind the falling boy with a blank look on her face, and a bat in her hand.

She blinked, taking in her surroundings, just in time to watch Harry fall through the ground, like it wasn't solid at all, instead being a strangely formed water surface.

"What did I just do?" she asked after noticing the bat in her hand, which she immediately dropped.

"Don't worry child," Salazar said softly, "You did well,"

It was evening already and Harry was still lying in his bed, calm, hovering on the fringe of sleep, when suddenly sweat begun to appear on every inch of his body. It was only visible sign of a small pandemonium raging throughout his body. Every muscle in his body was in spasms, his organs torn between a complete stop and overproduction. His whole body was ringing every single alarm bell it had that there was something wrong going on, not understanding signals that were coming from his brain. And in his brain, was the place where the true battle was going on.

Falling. That was all Harry knew. He was falling.

Or was he? There was no wind tousling his hair, only this pitch black emptiness in every direction. He wasn't even sure if his eyes were open. He remembered darkness from his training with Salazar, but this was nothing like it. This was more disorienting. With Slytherin, he at least knew where up and down was.

Having nothing else he could do, he started looking around. He raised his head, and sure enough, he could see his own body, but nothing else.

"Wait a minute," he muttered, thinking about what he just did. "Now at least I know where up is."

Since he could move, he stood up. Looking around, he once more reassured himself that this was nothing like the Room of Requirements. There, even when it was completely dark, you felt that the room had some boundaries. Here, it was only this overwhelming darkness and nothing more; nothing which could indicate that the darkness ever ended.

Then, with no previous warning, something appeared right in front of him. Startled slightly, he concentrated on the item that was just hanging in front of him.

"A dagger?" Harry asked himself when he noticed what it was, "Why would I need a..." he stopped abruptly. He raised his hand and tried to summon it, but nothing happened. He tried again, this time to make some sort of light, and still, nothing happened. "Okay," he

muttered to tell himself being sure enough that he couldn't use magic.

He once again concentrated on the dagger. It was rather non-descriptive. Just a simple blade with a handle, all made from steel. Seeing nothing else to do, he grabbed it, cold handle warming in his hand. Moments after he did that, just as unexpectedly blade have arrived, there was a flash of light in the distance, and after the spots dancing in Harry's eyes stopped, he could see a pair of glowing eyes some distance from him.

"Is this my animal?" he started to ask himself, but hadn't even got to half way through when the eyes started to charge at him. He ducked out of habit, and knew that something sharp had just barely missed his head. Harry quickly thought about what he might have done to anger it, but it was short lived, as another strike went his way, this time grazing his leg as he wasn't quick enough to evade the strike fully.

He couldn't guess how long he was rolling, jumping or dodging in any other way he could at the moment. He couldn't understand what type of animal he was facing, because he was struck by so many things like claws, hangs or talons, that he lost count. He had no idea what was his goal. Did he have to win the fight against his animal? Tame it in some way? If so, how could he do that?

He looked at the glowing eyes that were constantly coming closer. He lowered his head to take a deep calming breath and prepare himself for the next round, when his eyes caught sight of the dagger which he was still holding, even as he forgot about it in the middle of the fray.

"Okay," he whispered tiredly., "Let's get this over with," he said louder, while fixing his grip n the rough leather covering the handle, and launched himself in the direction of the glowing eyes.

It could have been hours, days, weeks or even months. There was no way to know how much time passed in the pitch black darkness of his mind. No matter in what units you wanted to measure it in, all Harry knew that he was running out of time.

On the outside though, it wasn't even half a minute since his body started to fight itself. But, where at first there was only sweat

covering his body, as time passed by, bruises, cuts or scratches appeared. What was more disconcerting about them was that they didn't look like the usual type you see every day. Those covering his body looked like they were done from the inside. Like there was something clawing its way out.

Suddenly, his body arched; all muscles tense. Then he slumped onto his bed, unmoving...

He was tired, and that was all he knew at the moment. He wasn't even sure how he was able to stand on his own feet.

Nothing worked. Whatever punch he threw at the thing he was fighting, it went straight through it, like there was nothing beside those glowing eyes hovering in nothingness. Moments later though, he was cut, stabbed, and torn by something sharp, by some sort of animal.

He couldn't comprehend it. He doubted he would ever understand it. But he was too tired to think. Only thing he could do seemed to be dropping to the ground, unconscious or dead. Seeing how things looked right now, it was probably the same thing.

But then, in that moment of total exhaustion, when he had to remind himself to breathe, one single thought floated from the back of his mind.

"Stop thinking," said a voice strangely reminding him of Magie.

"Be the animal," Harry finished the sentence from Salazar's lecture, and then plunged the fang shaped blade resting in his hand straight through his own heart.

Time stopped. For a second, or a whole millennium, there were only Harry's body floating in nothingness, and those glowing eyes. They were watching him intently; maybe even judging.

In the end, they closed really slowly, as if time only now tried to resume its flow. But when they opened again, it wasn't just a glow emanating from them. In its place, there was a source of light so bright, that it was painful to look at it. The light spread, washing over the pitch black emptiness. And when every single dark spot was gone...

"Welcome back."

Harry blinked. He was lying on the ground with the noon sun shining right over his face. He tried to raise his hand to shield his eyes, but he couldn't. It was too heavy. Everything felt too heavy to lift or even attempt to move.

"No wonder. After everything I've been through..." he said, only second later reminding himself why he spoke his thoughts out loud.

"I think it would be easier if you took it off first," said the same voice that woke him.

He looked in the direction the voice was coming from, and noticed Slytherin sitting comfortably in the shade of a tree growing nearby.

"Take what off?" he asked, and Salazar just cocked his head. "I see, as helpful as ever," Harry grumbled. But then he felt that indeed there was something different.

He lifted his head from the ground, and noticed what Slytherin meant. He was dressed in a long black coat. Slowly, he untangled himself from it, and even if he wasn't entirely fine, it was far easier to move without it. While Harry was catching a breath, Salazar came along and picked the coat from the ground.

"What is this thing?" Harry asked, eyeing the item that came out of nowhere.

"Oh, don't tell me you would like to go through what you just did every time you would like to change your form," Salazar said jokingly, making Harry scowl at him.

Then Harry stopped remembering something. "That's what you meant about people forcefully pulling skin of the animal on themselves."

"Yes," Slytherin agreed, "Not only wizards used that expression. Muggles too wore skins of animals, even when they had better materials, or even necklaces from their bones, teeth or claws. It was commonly thought that keeping those items close, would lend you the power of that animal. It worked best if you were the one to slay

the animal. A natural rite of passage, if you will. Of course, normally it was only boosting that person mental image of himself, natural charisma, strength or any other quality doing rest of the job when that person wasn't doubting them self, but in your case..." he left it hanging, simply patting the coat on his arm.

"Wait, but I haven't really won... have I?" Harry asked, not quite sure what really happened.

"You don't quite understand it, do you?" Salazar questioned, "Well, I don't really blame you, it's the whole point of this thing," he added with a chuckle. Seeing confusion on Harry's face, he continued. "I warned you that this way is really tricky, because what you have to do is to think of a way, to not think at all. The basic difference between random animals and humans is that human beings think, animals act on instinct. You know that there were many experiments to discover just how intelligent animals were. What people found out is that some animals can do complicated mathematical calculations in their head. But it isn't that that animal thinks of it like any mathematician would. They just do it, without ever thinking about it."

Harry listened to it, and reminded himself about the encounter with the glowing eyes. The first time they attacked was when he was thinking what they could be, and every next attack occurred when he was thinking what he could do. Even every time he was hurt was exactly when he was wondering what he was fighting with.

"There wasn't any animal, right?" Harry asked, coming back from his memory.

"No. To say it simply, this is your mind," Salazar said, pointing to everything around them, "And below," he added tapping his foot on the ground, "are your primal instincts. You went with your mind to that place, and since thinking, in terms of an animal, is over-thinking things... well, let's just say that they don't get well with each other,"

Hearing that, Harry just snorted.

"Well, modern wizards may have some right in Point One, but for a skilled wizard, it's all that it takes," Slytherin said with a small smile.

That triggered something else in Harry's memory; more precisely, the dagger that he was given. There was something strange about it. It seemed like it had...

"Changed," Harry muttered, wide eyed, "So, it wasn't about what I was fighting, but about the..." he turned to Salazar, to make sure he was making at least a little sense, but his mentor just shook his head.

"I know not what happened when you were gone. What I spoke until now was just theory. Precise circumstances of this way aren't fully known, since so few managed to accomplish it,"

"Few? Like, how few?" Harry asked, being thrown off track like that.

"I would have to say, you're the third one," Slytherin said with a nod.

"Wait, three that you know of?" Harry asked, a little unsettled by the answer.

"No, three that are known in history. Well, not including the last thousand years, but I don't really think anything changed in that short period of time," Salazar said offhandedly, making Harry's jaw drop to the ground.

"What!" Harry shouted.

"I was trying to tell you all about the precautions that one can take. To say the truth, I wonder how close you were to death. But the truth is that it was you that wanted it so bad that your magic reacted on instinct," Salazar said with a stern face.

That reminded Harry about something entirely else. "Where's Magie?" he asked, troubled that she was nowhere around.

"I believe she went to her house. It would be wise to check on her," Salazar said, even as Harry was already going to see her.

As he went further, the weather changed. First, the sun was blocked with thick clouds, and then a strong wind begun to blow. Reminding himself where he was, Harry wondered if it was because the bad feeling that he was experiencing, or something entirely else.

Finally arriving at Magie's house, he went straight to her room, only to find it locked.

"Magie?" he called after knocking softly couple of times without answer.

"Magie?" he tried a little louder, while grabbing the handle.

"Magie, please. I know you're in there," he said once more while leaning his head against the door. He heaved a sigh, and as he was just turning to walk away, there was a response. It was just a faint click of the door slowly unlocking.

Walking into the room, Harry noticed her sitting at the windowsill, with her hands wrapped around her legs and chin on her knees, staring out of the window. And only just now he realised, that it was raining outside.

"I didn't know that the weather changed here," he commented, not knowing what else he could say in this obviously awkward situation.

"It does. But it doesn't rain all that often," Magie responded, not looking his way, simply trailing her fingers after raindrops flowing on the other side of the glass.

They stayed that way, in uncomfortable silence. She was watching the rain. He contemplated what might be bothering her.

"It's just..." she begun before stopping, and he was again reminded that she knew when he was in need. That or simply the fact that there were no secrets between them.

"I don't want to be alone." she whispered, still looking outside.

Harry blinked in surprise. "Alone?" he asked while taking one step closer to her "Why not move to the city, with everyone else?"

"I couldn't live there," she said, stopping him with her hand.

Harry followed her gaze, and he could see the town in the distance. But it didn't look anything like it usual, mighty self. With rain blurring the shapes and whole town enveloped in some kind of odd mist, it

made a really ominous picture. Harry couldn't help but think of a ghost town.

"But with everyone there..." he tried again.

"They aren't real," she cut him off.

"But..." Harry wanted to argue.

"You don't see it," Magie interrupted. "But they are only your thoughts. If you don't read about or ponder some things, they don't change. Talking with them is like listening to those dolls that talk. You can pull that string all you want, but eventually you'll just hear the same lines, playing in a loop. They aren't real," she repeated. "You are," she added and looked at him for the first time. He could clearly see sadness in her usually playful eyes. "And I don't want to lose you, in any way, over some stupid thing," she finished, and Harry was too aware of the cuts all over his body.

"You won't," Harry answered with a smile, coming closer so that he was standing just beside her, "Because you're always there to save my sorry ass," he said, at it actually made corner of his mouth quirk a little. "Like today." she cocked her head when he mentioned that, "Bah, today was a small fry, imagine how I would grow up without you. A loner who blames himself over everything bad in the world, and, the worst thing possible," Harry lowered his voice dramatically, "not knowing anything about joking around!" he gasped, "Oh, the horror! The terror! The tragedy!" Harry kept lamenting over the vision.

Magie laughed out loud over his act, and then threw her arms around him, keeping him close. Harry hugged her back, simply being there for her.

"I'm alright," he finally said.

"I know," she responded.

"And I won't do it again... well, at least not without you," Harry added, smiling.

"You better not," was all he got in return.

They stood like that for a while, and then "Come on, let's have some fun. I heard there is something fun in the cinema tonight," Harry proposed, and was startled by the:

"You wish, Potter!" that Magie delivered with a mean face. "I'm not interested in being your girlfriend," she added while pushing him back. "I'm too fun for you!" she said while admiring her own nails. Harry just grinned in response.

"I'm much more fitting for the role of a sister poking her nose in her brother's businesses and annoying him to no end," she said with a nod.

"I thought you already were doing that," Harry replied, getting himself a punch in the shoulder for his trouble.

For the rest of the time before Harry was too tired to stay awake, the two of them spent like they were used to when Harry was a kid, just joking around together, and admiring the rainbow that appeared on the clearing sky.

Slytherin didn't joke saying that this way was extremely dangerous, and even as Harry lived to speak about it, the next couple of days weren't exactly a walk in the park thing. To give you an example, try to train extensively for twenty four hours straight, and then deal with the muscle ache. And that was only the muscles. With every organ responsible for production of substances like hormones or enzymes having to reboot, it wasn't the best day of his life when Harry finally woke up.

His aunt even wanted to get him to a hospital, but Salazar told that it was best not to. Since his body did it to itself, it would just need time to get things straight again. Introducing alien substances to the already messed up system wouldn't speed things up in any way. When Harry commented that it would at least be less painful, Slytherin responded that he was an idiot.

"Think of a pain as a teacher. First it points out, very effectively, the place where the problem is. Additionally, if you distinguish the type of pain, if it's stabbing, tearing, an unbearable pressure to name some, you can learn even more, and deal with the problem in best way possible. But even when you do, it doesn't vanish instantly. It stays, reminding you to not overuse your body, like you would think

that you're fine already. When the danger is gone, you get those aches. That's just a reminder, like a teacher saying to a student, "You were stupid, now you will remember to behave, won't you?", or something along those lines,"

So, Harry waited, learning some things about his body that he hadn't quite noticed before. Like, groups of muscles he didn't know existed, or even in just how many situations you use them. Salazar wasn't all that bad, and taught him some ways wizards can deal with injuries. It wasn't exactly healing, just sort of a natural patch which would help, but would heal, or even hold that long.

Finally a day came when Harry got rid of the rest of the pain, and thought it would be good to take a closer look on his animal form. But when Salazar brought the coat from the other day, Harry noticed something peculiar about it.

"Wait, scales and feathers?" Harry asked, confused. The coat itself was made from rough leather, but there was a patch on the back and shoulders, where feathers were sticking out, creating a thick cover, something you can see on a normal bird. "You're sure that this is right? I mean, no offence, but I don't know that kind of an animal."

"I have a theory or two," Salazar said with a smile, "Now, are we doing this?" he asked, holding the coat for Harry to put on.

He hesitated for a moment, but finally put it on, noticing that now it didn't felt heavier than a normal one. Slowly, he came back to the real world, only to have the strangest feeling of his life. He knew he was still in his room, but it was totally different experience. Some things he thought to be obvious seemed, and some that he haven't noticed before were exposed with full force.

Leaving getting used to it for later, he remembered Slytherin's advice that his body will respond to his needs, he used his instinct to simply move towards the mirror he set on his bed, not thinking too much if he had hoofs or paws, how many of them there were, and how exactly he should operate them.

When he came near enough, he saw that he was a jet black snake. What kind of snake, he wasn't sure, and to tell the truth, he wasn't

exactly concerned with this at the moment, as he was staring at two wings with pure white feathers, sprouting from his mid-body.

'What the hell?' he thought to himself, 'Since when do snakes have wings?'

'Just as I thought,' Slytherin's voice reached him, 'I told you once that treating your magic as a person simply wasn't done. I think you are experiencing a side effect of that. Your animal form is supposed to represent your personality. Not saying anything about the thoughts in your head, we can say that you have at least two types of personality. You, and her, thus the mix-up,'

'Then why aren't you somehow mixed into this?'

'Well, you are already a snake. I don't think I could add anything more,' Salazar responded with a chuckle.

'Magie?' Harry wanted to ask how she felt about all this, but again his mentor took over.

'You can't talk to her in that state. The 'pulling a skin of an animal over yourself' is quite literal, and right now, magical energies in your body are working to pull your primal instincts to the surface, and making your body take form most suitable to accommodate them.'

'Wait, so I can't do any kind of magic in this form?'

'No, you cannot. This form isn't the form any wizard would choose to fight in in the first place. But it has different merits. Usually, wizards used their animal form to travel, in day to day situations or to get to locations which were beyond of reach of human strength. Given your new found senses, you can look on the world, which can sometimes show you something you were looking for, but couldn't see before. As for a fight, well, I think I don't have to tell you how useful this can be when your enemies think they are still hunting a human being.'

Harry thought about all that, watching his form when Salazar was talking.

'So, what's now? Maybe... Sirius said that it is usual to give your animal form a name, as to distinguish between the personas,' Harry proposed. 'Any ideas?'

'Ah, yes, the mental effects of becoming the animal, you're quite right. Let's see here,' Salazar said, and even in his voice it was clear that he's taking it seriously. 'Images of winged serpents were known, even in my times, to appear on relics in Pharaohs tombs. I think that, given the mission I bestowed upon you, to make wizards take their proper place in the world, King's Counsellor might be a good idea,'

'Sounds old fashioned,' Harry commented. 'Why don't we shorten it to KC?'

'Ah, this generation's youth and their sense of style, what have world come to...' Salazar lamented to nobody in particular. 'But since you're more and more proficient in magic, tell me, have you thought how to deal with wizards yet?'

Harry wanted to face palm himself because of Slytherins 'modest' requirements, but he hadn't had any palms at the moment, and a flap of his wind simply threw him off of his bed...

AN. I... I... I don't know what to say. This chapter sort of... happened. Only now that I'm finished I noticed how big it is, and just how many things got thrown in there. I'm blaming it on my muse. She was lazy lately, so now she came back with a vengeance.

Just to clear one thing. I know that snake as Harry's animal form was done before, but in animal symbolism, it means intelligence and knowledge (among other things) so it fits to this Harry well (I think). Being me, I had to play with the concept a little and threw Magie in there. I think that for her a swan fits, being symbol of partnership and transformation (again, among other things).

I don't know if I'll use his animal form all that much in the future chapters, but it was fun to write.

I didn't write Harry Potter, because if I would, it would look something like... well, like this!

AN. EnjoyEveryMoment, and I as well, we had busy week. But the chapter is, finally, here.

It was more than a week later that Harry realised that his transformation triggered another change. Among other things, his appetite spiked, his muscles from the training with Slytherin became more noticeable, his clothes became too small... and in two weeks time, Harry could basically see himself grow. He was standing in the bathroom, gazing at the hair that begun to appear on his chin, when the doorbell rung, and moments later:

"Harry! Someone would like to speak with you!" his aunt's voice came from downstairs.

Intrigued, since no one ever visited him, he went down and noticed Sirius standing in the door. Sirius, on the other hand, didn't have quite that calm of a reaction. Upon seeing his godson, his eyes widened comically.

"Whoa, there. Hold your horses Harry," Sirius exclaimed, "Just how much can you grow in one month? I don't suppose it's even that long, but... I'll be damned," he kept on babbling, his jaw barely hanging on its hinges from when he picked it from the floor.

"Easy up, Sirius," Harry responded, grinning, but he understood what his godfather meant when he reached the bottom of the stairs and they were still equal height.

"So, you do know this man?" Petunia interrupted, still standing by the door.

"Yes, Aunt Petunia," Harry replied and proceeded with the introductions, "Sirius, this is my Aunt, Petunia Dursley," at which the older man extended his hand, "Aunt Petunia, this is Sirius Black, my Godfather,"

"Pleasure," Petunia replied shaking the extended hand, although Harry noticed a hint of mistrust at the word 'Godfather'.

"Godfather, you say?" Vernon's voice reached them from the living-room, echoing his wife's doubts.

Moments later they could see him coming to the hallway, but he didn't even make one step out of the room when he stopped dead in his tracks, staring at Sirius like he was a ghost.

"Petunia," Vernon said very slowly, not tearing his gaze away as if not to scare away some sort of animal, "call the police,"

Petunia immediately let go of the hand she just shook making Sirius scowl. Harry, thinking fast, tried to find a reason for this kind of behaviour, and instantly, face of his Godfather appearing on television for nearly a month during the previous summer came to his mind.

"Relax, Uncle Vernon, they were looking for him, but it's alright now,"

"Why were they looking for him then?" Vernon retorted, still mistrustful towards the stranger in his house.

"I was framed," Sirius said out of habit.

It didn't do much to ease Vernon's mind, and they stood there, tension thick in the air, until Petunia took matters in her own hands.

"Well, it sounds like a fascinating story," she said, breaking the standstill, "Maybe you could tell it over dinner,"

"Oh, no. I wouldn't want to be a bother," Sirius replied, not wanting to make the already uncomfortable situation worse.

"You shouldn't worry. Dudley is out tonight so it won't be problem at all. Vernon, why don't you invite our guest to the living room while I take care of the meal?" she said, leaving no room for discussion, and heading to the kitchen.

The evening indeed started a little tense, but once Sirius begun his tale, he kept Dursley's in rapt attention, with both asking questions – Vernon about the magical world, and Petunia about his friendship with Potters, and Lily in particular. Harry could see that it was making miracles to Sirius, to tell all about the events that were haunting him for so long to someone who was listening, and

genuinely interested. When it came to the Dursley's, it was entirely different matter.

One summer Harry noticed his Aunt dusting old albums which he never saw before. When he inquired about them, Petunia sat him down and went over every page of photographs from her childhood. It was something else to hear about silly things she and Lily did in their youth, maybe mostly because of the fondness in his aunts voice. She did it only once, but from time to time, he could see her going through them on her own, stopping mostly on pictures where she stood close to her sister, and not on the either side of their parents. Harry wondered if she was thinking what could have been if things gone differently, or simply enjoying happier moments from the past. He didn't ask about it, thinking it too insensitive.

His uncle though, probably like most of the men, was looking on technical side of things. Whenever Harry was home, Vernon would come up with a question, nothing specific, simply how a certain thing is done in wizarding community, and upon receiving an answer, he wouldn't comment, simply returning to his own activities. At first, Harry thought that his uncle was keeping a score, tallying whose side of things was better. Now, it seemed that his uncle did it to remind himself that wizarding community was different. Not worse, simply different. A community of people doing things their own way. Truth be told, Harry thought that his uncles main problem with wizards at this point was that even if there were bad people who would want everything their way, bad wizards had the power to simply do as they please.

Just seeing the two of them having a wizard as a guest in their own home, not saying anything about discussing finer merits of mundane life, proved how long way were they from how they used to be.

When the dinner finished, and discussions over a glass of brandy came to a stop, Harry reminded himself to ask a very important question.

"Sirius, why are you here in the first place?"

"Oh, right, I was hoping to take you to the Quidditch World Cup..." Sirius begun, but was interrupted.

"Quidditch? You mean that sport you play at the school?" Vernon asked Harry, getting a nod in response. "Well, I don't fully get that sport, but I don't suppose it would hurt to see it at least once."

"I'm sorry to say, but as it is an international affair, I don't suppose there aren't any tickets left. Not this close to the actual game,"

"Maybe it would be possible for you to come for one of my school games," Harry interjected. "But Sirius," he continued turning to his godfather, "the finals are still some time away."

"Right, that's another thing I would like to talk about," Sirius took over, directing his next words to Vernon. "Now that I'm back, I would like to spend some time with Harry, and I thought that maybe he could spend some part of holidays with me,"

Vernon quickly mulled it all over. "Well, as long as it suits Harry," at which he got another nod, "and we know in advance when you would like to have him at your place, I guess there shouldn't be any problems,"

"So, when are we going?" Harry asked from his spot.

Sirius gaze at the dark street outside before replying, "Since it's late already, and you won't have too much time to pack, I guess I could pick you up tomorrow around the same time as I came today, I hope it won't be too soon of a notice?"

"Well, since it's the first time, I guess it can't be helped," Vernon replied while storing away the rest of the brandy.

Seeing the evening coming to an end, Sirius said his goodbyes, and left Harry to run and pack for the next eventful day... Well, right after he finished helping his aunt with cleaning the dishes.

The next day, as promised, Sirius came back, noticing Harry already waiting outside with his things.

"That happy to see me?" Sirius said as a greeting, "All packed up and ready?"

"Of course. I even have a rolled up paper; you know, just in case," Harry replied, and they both added a point for him on the scoreboard

of their on-going Punchline contest that begun at their very first meeting.

"Come on," Sirius said, and continued to the Dursley's backyard. After raising his eyebrows, and noticing that his godfather wasn't paying attention, Harry followed. Coming to a stop beside the older wizard, his trunk in hand, he looked around, and just couldn't help but ask:

"Great; and now what?"

Sirius didn't reply, simply threw his arm on his godson's shoulders, and before Harry could ask what that was all about, he experienced the strangest sensation he had ever felt. Immediately, everything went black; he was pressed very hard from all directions; he could not breathe, there were iron bands tightening around his chest; his eyeballs were being forced back into his head; his ear-drums were being pushed deeper into his skull.

Just as soon as it begun, the feeling subsided, and Harry was left stumbling to the ground. He was just about to shout at Sirius, when he became aware of the park in which they were hidden from view, the houses on the other side of the gate, and a strange feeling that something was amiss; missing would be a better term, but just as he was trying to think if it wasn't just after effect of what he thought was apparition moments ago:

"Should-be-demolished may be found at number twelve, Grimmauld Place, London," Sirius whispered right to his ear, and Harry was too fascinated with a building appearing out of thin air to give any thought to his strange feelings. Only when the building was standing firmly in its place and Sirius started walking towards it, did Harry process what just happened, starting with:

"Should-be, what?" Harry chuckled while following Sirius.

"Don't ask, I had a bad day that day," his godfather grumbled in response, while opening the door. "Oh, and you shouldn't touch anything funny. My family wasn't the nicest type," Sirius added offhandedly, making Harry stop at the doorsteps.

He was about to follow, but he didn't even make one step through the threshold when a bulldog with a strange hat on his head run

between his legs, skidded around the corner, and followed running to what seemed to be a drawing room. Harry begun to think that it might be one of Sirius' friends that he had met whilst running around the park, until a certain voice reached him.

'Come on! Don't make me chase you around!' Magie kept shouting, even as she sprinted past Harry, following the dog to the living room.

Intrigued, he went after the two, and making only one step into the room barely held his laughter at the scene before him. At one side the fat bulldog barely able to lift itself from the ground tried to jump on the cabinet. On the other, there was Magie, furiously tugging at the leash to keep the ferocious beast at bay.

'You're going to just stand there, or are you going to help me?' she snapped at his inaction.

Harry shook his head while coming to her rescue, but stopped again, because upon seeing his approach, the dog stopped its attack on the cabinet, run up to him, and after making couple of circles to catch his attention returned to the previous spot, barked once, and seeing its job done, sat on the floor being content to simply keep its tongue anywhere but in its mouth.

'What's his story?' Harry asked while chuckling.

'Beats me,' Magie responded from the couch, still a little out of breath, 'I just had this idea that we might need something to find certain objects, when this thing appeared out of nowhere, trashed my room and dragged me all the way up here. This...this...' Magie tried to express her annoyance, in the end managing only a disgruntled noise.

'This is Gladstone,' Harry said while scratching the dog.

'What' Magie asked, not overly pleased with the attention the dog was getting.

'You know, Gladstone,' Harry repeated while pointing to the hat sitting atop the dog's head, which could be only from a Sherlock Holmes story, 'I think that's his name,' he added.

'Oh,' Maggie muttered, her irritated mood disappearing in an instance, 'So now we have a dog detective, now we only need to find the thing he was...' her musings stopped when she took a closer look at the cabinet. At her sudden silence, Harry stopped petting the dog and following her gaze, noticed a golden locket sitting proudly in the middle of display.

'Don't tell me...' Harry begun after making sure she stared at the item in the exact same way she did last time.

'Yes,' she answered without him having to finish the question, 'It's just like the diary.'

Harry stood up, and coming even closer to the cabinet, noticed another peculiar thing.

'I know this snake,' he voiced while gazing at the ornamental S at the front of the locket, 'Didn't this belong to...'

'Yes, it did,' a new voice interrupted, and Harry noticed that Slytherin made his appearance, 'It's a memento from my wife,' he continued in a strangely monotone voice, 'I think I remember this because I've spent so much time working on it, that it would be impossible to remove every memory including it and still have something left. I was so focused on it as Rowena was on her Room. I believe this could be my greatest creation. And before you even ask, no. It wouldn't give you any amazing powers like the Room does. While the spell work might be close to the complexity of Rowena's work, the only one who could appreciate it would be a person whose world crumbled and died in one single instance. It didn't give you an unlimited power, but just enough to get up from your bed every morning. It didn't boost your intelligence, but just showed that there is still something more than despair. It did a lot of things, but mostly, in its own, unique way, gave me hope...'

Salazar kept on talking, even as Harry removed the locket from the cabinet and held it in front of him. Slytherin didn't attempt to reach for it, not being able to touch it, and Harry didn't interrupt his speech, thinking it too insensitive to ask what had happened to his wife.

'And now this,' he continued after a short stop, still using that monotone voice, 'The things that were done to this item... Harry,' he said, making his student look him straight in the eye, 'I have another

request, this time not as a mentor but as a friend. If you can, find the people who altered this locket,' he said, getting a nod from Harry. 'And kill them,'

Harry didn't look away from his mentor, closely observing everything about him. Harry saw him in many ways, angry, bitter, sarcastic... But he didn't remember one occasion when he could say that he saw Slytherin really furious. And now, if anybody asked him to describe the term "cold fury", he would be hard pressed to think of another example as well suited as this one.

"You be putting that away now," said an entirely new voice, and just by switching his attention, Harry found himself alone with a really old House-elf, his friends disappearing in a flash.

"I'm sorry, am I interrupting your cleaning?" Harry replied, too aware of the thick dust covering majority of the room.

"Shouldn't touch things that aren't his," the elf insisted, "Put it back," he added more forcefully.

"What's going on here? Kreacher. You again? I told you I didn't want to see you," Sirius voice came from the hallway, and the man himself stepped into the room moments later, "Harry, I told you not to pick up funny things."

"Sorry, but I've been reading up on curse-breaking and I was interested if I could have some of the things, you know, to practice. I mean, you have to have experience, right?" Harry quickly explained, not ready to explain the whole truth behind the item he was holding.

Sirius was about to make his reply, when Remus stuck his head into the room.

"Where did you say the anti-pest products were?" he asked, and upon seeing Harry, "Oh, hey. I'm just getting started on making your bedroom liveable."

"Try the first floor broom-closet," Sirius responded, "Or the back room in the bathroom at the top floor," he called down the hallway.

"Hey, what's Remus doing here?" Harry asked out of curiosity.

"You know how he's like if he thinks you're trying to be charitable. I got tired and proposed him a job, you know, to get this dump pest-free. Since he is an expert on dark creatures it isn't that hard, and he can live here and keep me company while doing it. It's a win-win situation. And the fact that he's being paid tons more than while teaching is an absolute coincidence." Sirius finished, grinning.

"Wait, so you're saying that he quit teaching at Hogwarts? Does it mean we'll have a new teacher next year?"

"Yeah, I guess. But you know, "in that exact moment there was a sound of buckets falling down the stairs, and moments later a string of curses like Harry had never heard before reverberated throughout the house. "Oh, come on Moony! I told you to be careful," Sirius shouted over the ruckus, quickly exiting the room. He stuck his head back a second later, "I like it that you want to learn things, and sure, practice is important, but let's do it in a controlled way, so for now, just don't pick strange things up," he said, before disappearing again.

Harry looked into the hallway seeing Sirius fighting with canvas over the portrait at the end of the hall, then turned to the occupant of the room that probably thought that everyone else had forgotten about him.

"Are you guarding this?" Harry asked, again lifting the locket into full view.

"Why do you ask?" Kreacher said while stepping out of the shadows where he was hiding per wishes of his master.

"I have my own goals involving this item, and if we're heading the same way, I don't see any reason for us to fight. If it's the opposite, at least it will be in the open. Not that I would like to fight a determined House-elf."

Kreacher stopped short at that, "What goals?"

"I want to make this locket... harmless," Harry allowed, not knowing himself what exactly he would need to do.

Kreacher seemed to think hard on that, but in the end, "Master Regulus commanded Kreacher to destroy the locket. Kreacher was

not able. Kreacher is keeping it safe till a way is found. What can a young wizard do?"

"I can promise you," Harry begun, looking straight at him, "that I will do everything to find a way to make this item harmless. If I'm not be able to change how it is, I will find a way to destroy it for good,"

Even at the start, Kreacher returned to his angry self, "Wizard's promises don't mean anything," he snarled, trying to grasp the locket from Harry's hands.

Harry moved the locket out of the elf's reach, and stopped him with his hand, "Fine, then I'll let someone else vouch for my word," at which Magie squeezed the elf's hands.

Kreacher stopped short, his eyes opened wide and strangely unseeing.

"Do we have an agreement?" Harry asked the baffled creature.

"I believe we do," the old elf whispered, and upon those words, Magie again faded into nothingness. Regaining his senses, Kreacher took another long look at Harry, then gave a low bow, this one more genuine than the one he gave Sirius just moments ago, after which he disappeared with a crack.

The day Harry and Sirius went to the Diagon Alley to buy all the school supplies for the next year at Hogwarts went relatively normal. It would be normal altogether if not for the moment that Harry announced that they had to go back to Gringotts for an important meeting. This in itself was strange in its own right, Harry planning things without anyone else's knowledge. But as Sirius was about to see, you shouldn't expect too much normality whenever Harry Potter was concerned. It became apparent right at the front desk.

Harry stepped right to the teller, saying "Hello. My name is Harry Potter and I have a meeting scheduled at 2pm," which was completely normal, as far as Sirius was concerned.

"Identification please," Goblin replied, extending his hand to take any appropriate item in this kind of situation. So far, so good.

Then Harry shook the goblins hand... Sirius blinked, because he seriously was looking at Harry casually exchanging handshakes with a Goblin. Of course, what he couldn't see was Magie appearing right next to his godson and putting her own hand on top of the already joined ones.

The goblin stared at Harry for a while, and then simply said, "Indeed you are. You are just in time; please proceed through the door on the right,"

"Thank you," Harry responded, making his way to the hundreds of doors at the other side of the bank. Sirius only moments later caught on that they were in fact done, and was made to run after his godson.

Coming to a set of doors, not quite long enough for Sirius to get out of the previous shock, he got another one when Harry exchanged bows with a goblin that approached them, and with the casual word of "Your assistance won't be needed Senior Teller Griphook, I know the way quite well," bowed again, and went along his way. The Goblin didn't even comment, simply returned to his post. This time, Sirius didn't even try to reason with himself that humans walking on their own through Goblin mines was something unheard of.

But looking at Harry one could only say that he indeed knew how to move through Goblin tunnels, since he made his way as effortlessly as any born Goblin would. They ended in front of very old doors with intricate carvings all over, but even that didn't keep Sirius' attention for long as he could clearly hear Harry speaking with the guards at the door in what seemed to be gobbledygook, and started wondering where he could have learned that. And again it was short lived, because moments later he saw who they were meeting with.

"Ah, Mr. Potter, how is your businesses going?" the old goblin behind the desk called upon their entry.

"Fruitful, Master Ragnok. I believe it's the only suitable word," Harry replied after he finished a very low bow, one which Sirius hastily repeated.

"That is good to hear. And who is accompanying you today?" Ragnok inquired, casting his old eyes upon Sirius.

"Master Ragnok, this is my Godfather, Sirius Black. Sirius, this-

"Of course, I know who you are, Master Ragnok. The pleasure is all mine," Sirius interrupted, partly not believing he was talking to this person, and in part trying to copy Harry's polite manners.

"And I've heard about you as well, Lord Black. I hope you are satisfied with our services."

"Looking at my current bank account, I would have to be stupid to say I'm not," Sirius said with a polite smile.

"Good business, is always good news to the goblins. But talking about business," Ragnok continued, turning again to Harry, "What can we do for you today, Mr. Potter?"

"Not wasting any time, I've come into possession of certain objects, which, even if worth something, require specific handling," Harry begun, getting all business-like, "I'm not requiring services of your curse-breakers, merely keeping them under guard will suffice, so I can study them on my own in safe environment. My Godfather worries that I'm not yet knowledgeable enough," Harry finished, and the last sentence got a good chuckle out of the goblins gathered in the room. Sirius felt that he was missing a joke, but for the life of it, he had no idea what it was about.

"May we see the items?" Ragnok got back on track.

At that, Harry laid on the desk the locket, and additionally, a diary Sirius had never seen before. Ragnok exchanged words in gobbledygook with his assistants, and turning back to Harry, "Are you certain you don't wish to consult with our curse-breakers?"

"If you deem it too dangerous, I will agree to supervision. But I'd rather solve the mystery on my own."

"Understandable," Ragnok responded, and was about to say something more to his assistant, when he gave the locket a closer look, "May I inquire where have you found this particular item?"

"It was in my home," Sirius interjected, "My family wasn't the nicest type, and Harry just had to pick through suspicious things from the

moment he stepped in," he explained, getting another chuckle out of Ragnok.

"Don't take offence in me laughing, you are quite right that there are some dark enchantments placed upon it," the old goblin explained his behaviour, "I was merely wondering at your previous comment about your godsons state of knowledge."

"I don't quite understand," Sirius said, clearly confused, "What about it?"

"This, Lord Black," Ragnok begun to answer while pointing at the locket, "If my old eyes aren't deceiving me, is the lost relic of the Founders of Hogwarts. Namely, Locket of Salazar Slytherin,"

That was the last thing that Sirius expected, and his jaw dropped to the floor, and not only rolling around, but making a dancing performance as a leader of a parade with its own marching band.

In the meantime Harry tried to not look smug... Well, at least not too much.

Ragnok finished consulting with his assistants and paperwork was drawn concluding their business. But the talk over a cup of tea between Harry and Ragnok that commenced, looking more like conversation of long lost friends than any other between goblin and a human being known in history, did little to help Sirius' state of mind.

AN. The effect of the locket that Slytherin is describing isn't from the spell-work he added to the item. Spells did their own thing, but the description is mainly about him still having a purpose in life. If I'll have enough free time, I'll try to write an omake about this part.

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